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THE MILITARY SYSTEM IN ANCIENT INDIA

By

BIMAL KANTI MAJUMDAR, M.A., D. PHIL.

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Dedicated to

The sacred memory of my affectionate aunt Śrījuktā Kṣetramohinī Rāya, who instilled into my mind a love for India's mythology and ancient history.

PREFACE

An attempt has been made in this little volume to trace the evolution of military system in Ancient India with the Vedic period as the starting point of enquiry and ending with the Muslim conquest of Hindusthān, stress being solely laid on North Indian History.

The field covered in these pages, I must confess, is by no means untrodden. Other scholars like E. W. Hopkins, G. T. Date, H. C. Ray, P. C. Chakravarti, R. C. Dikshitar have their work on one aspect or the other of this interesting topic. My treatment of the subject is somewhat different. It is chronological,—period by period, empire by empire with an eye to describing the military organisation in the political background, for, a sound defence organisation is often an aid to political expansion, and political expansion is a recurring phenomenon in Ancient Indian History.

In preparing this book I have utilised to some extent the mass of materials embodied in Dr. P. C. Chakravarti's excellent work—'The Art of War in Ancient India' which is a thesis approved for the degree of the Doctor of Philosophy in the University of London.

I must acknowledge my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. J. N. Banerjee, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.A.S.B., Carmichael Professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture, Calcutta University,

for his ungrudging encouragement and invaluable guidance. My thanks are also due to Dr. R. G. Basak, M.A., Ph.D. for his kind advice and helpful suggestions. I am thankful to Prof. Haraprosad Chatterjee, M.A., my colleague in Asutosh College, who, assisted me in many ways and also to my niece Śrīmatī Śīlā Ghosh whose constant encouragement has enabled me to write out this monograph under most difficult circumstances.

"PRANTIK"
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BIMAL KANTI MAJUMDAR

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGI	—Ancient Geography of India by Cunningham, 1924.
AHI	—Advanced History of India (Macmillan), 1946.
Alt. Leben	—Altindisches Leben, Berlin, 1879.
AWAI	—The Art of War in Ancient India by Dr. P. C. Chakravarty, published by General Printers, Calcutta, 1941.
Beal-Life	—The Life of Hiuen Tsang by Shaman Hwui Li, translated by S. Beal (London, 1911).
Beal-Records	—Buddhist Records of the Western World, translated by S. Beal.
B.G.	—Bombay Gazetteer.
CHI	—Cambridge History of India.
CII	—Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Vol. III by Fleet, Calcutta, 1888.
DHNI	—Dynastic History of Northern India by Dr. H. C Ray, Calcutta University.
Elliot	—The History of India as told by its own historians, edited by Elliot and Dowson, 1877.
EHI	—Early History of India, 4th Edn., by V. A. Smith.

Ep. Ind.	—Epigraphia Indica.
GI	—Gupta Inscriptions by Fleet.
H.B.	—History of Bengal, Vol. I (Dacca University), Calcutta, 1943.
H.C.	—Harṣacarita of Bāṇa, translated by Cowell and Thomas.
IA	—Indian Antiquary, Bombay.
IB	—Inscriptions of Bengal, Vol. III by N. G. Majumdar.
IC	—Indian Culture, Calcutta.
IHQ	—Indian Historical Quarterly, Calcutta.
Jat	—Jātakas, translated by Cowell.
JAOS	—Journal of the American Oriental Society.
JRAS	—Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Bengal.
JBORS	—Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society.
JDL	—Journal of the Department of Letters, Calcutta University.
Kam	—Kāmandakiya Nītisāra, Bengali translation by Gaṇapati Sarkar.
Kaut	—Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra, translation by Shyāma Sāstrī, Mysore, 1923.
KFB	—Kītāb Fūtuh al-Buldān of Balādhuri, translated by Hitti and Murgotten..
KH	—Kītāb-ul-Hind of al-Birūnī.
KY	—Kītāb-i-Yamīnī of 'Utbī, translation by Reynolds (London).
Mabht	—Mahābhārata, English translation by P. C. Roy, (Calcutta).

MASI	—Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India.
MMK.	—Ārya-Mañju-Śrī-Mūlakalpa, edited by K. P. Jayaswal.
OHI	—Oxford History of India by Dr. V. A. Smith.
PHAI	—Political History of Ancient India by Dr. H. C. Ray Chaudhuri.
Ram	—Rāmāyaṇa, English translation by M. N. Dutt (Calcutta).
	—Rāmāyaṇa, English translation by R. T. H. Griffith.
RC	—Rāmacarita edited by M. M. Haraprosād Śāstrī.
RT	—Rājataraṅgiṇī, English translation by Sir Aurel Stein.
RV	—Ṛg Veda, English translation by R. T. H. Griffith, 2 Vols.
Śukra	—Śukranīti, English translation by B. K. Sarkar (Allahabad).
SBE	—Sacred Book of the East.
SI	—Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilisation, by Dr. D. C. Sircar, Vol. I, Calcutta University.
SII	—South Indian Inscriptions.
Sachau	—Alberūnī's India.
T.F.	—T'arīkh-i-Firishta, translation by Briggs.
T.N.	—Tabaqāti-Nāsirī of Maulānā Minhāj-Ud-dīn, translation by Raverty.
Y.C.	—On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India by T. Watters.

TRANSLITERATION METHOD

The following are the main points to be noted in connection with the method of transliteration adopted in this work :

आ	=	ā	ई	=	ī		—	
ऋ	=	ṛ	ए	=	e	ऐ	=	ai
ओ	=	o	औ	=	au	ङ	=	ṅ
च	=	c	छ	=	ch	ञ	=	ñ
ट	=	ṭ	ठ	=	ṭh	ड	=	ḍ
ढ	=	ḍh	ण	=	ṇ	श	=	ś
ष	=	ṣ	स	=	s		—	
Visarga	=	ḥ				Anusvara	=	ṁ

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INTRODUCTION

SCOPE AND SOURCES

The instinct of self-preservation which is so strong even among the lower animals, has been present in Man ever since the dawn of human history. From the Palæolithic times he has been fighting and defending himself against Nature and wild beasts, and with his steady march from barbarism to civilisation and the gradual development of intellectual pursuits he has discovered weapons first to defend himself, then to defend his family and clan, and finally his own territory and nation. In India which is the home of one of the oldest civilisations of the world, the people passed through all these processes of individual, clan and territorial fighting in the different stages of their interestingly long and complicated history. The object of this monograph is to portray, as far as possible, a picture of the military system of ancient India and her methods of national defence with special reference to North Indian history. By Ancient India we mean the period of Indian chronicle beginning from the earliest times when some knowledgeable data about it are available and ending with the conquest of Hindustān by the Turks in the 12th century A.D. It thus includes some portion of what may properly be called Early Mediæval period for the sake of convenience and continuity.

The archæological discoveries at Mohenjo-dāro, Sind and other places,—the remains of the so-called Indus Valley Civilisation illumined by the researches of a band of scholars have proved the existence of 'palaces' with ancient foundations, of swords and other weapons, offensive and defensive, of old

fort-walls for citadel defence at some places and of watchmen's quarters at Mohenjo-dāro. These startling discoveries tend to show that the people of the time (*c.* third millennium B. C.) were properly armed, and realised early the value of defence against aggressors. Thus, the Indus Valley data throw some interesting side-light on the earliest methods of military defence of the Indian people.

As in the realm of political speculations, so in the matter of the art of warfare, ancient Indians of the Vedic and post-Vedic periods undoubtedly thought a good deal. Their contributions in both these respects are varied and considerable. A distinct science called 'Dhanurveda' giving in detail the method of using the bow and the arrow and other weapons developed in India long ago. References to this science are found in Indian literature and inscriptions. In the Viṣṅupurāṇa[1] 'Dhanurveda' is considered as one of the eighteen branches of knowledge. It has been described as an Upaveda of the Yajurveda, "by which one can be proficient in fighting, the use of arms and weapons and the use of battle arrays."

The history of ancient India is primarily a chequered history of invasions,—of the rise and fall of countless kingdoms and republics. From the sixth century B.C.—a century from which it has been possible to present a connected political and dynastic history of Northern India, the country experienced a series of foreign invasions, and although the issue of such attacks very often went against India, there was no dearth of sturdy peoples and eminent princes who came forward to offer resistance to the enemies by organising strong defence of their mother country. No student of Indian His-

1 Wilson's translation. VIII. 67.

tory will ever forget such conspicuous names as those of Pūru and Candragupta Maurya, Agnimitra and Skanda Gupta, Narasiṁha Bālāditya and Dāhir, Ānandapāla and Pṛthvirāja whose records of services in the defence of their motherland are both brilliant and inspiring. Strabo's[2] statement that ancient Indians did not cultivate the art of war does not at all appear convincing, as in the Age of Alexander India was, in the words of classical writers, "a strongly defended country, with a well organised army consisting of infantry, cavalry, elephants and war chariots", and we may add that the quality of her striving also had not been always below par. The brave resistance offered to the Macedonian invader by many independent states and autonomous tribes of the Punjab and Sind, viz. the Elder Poros, the Assakenians, the Aspasians, the Oxydrakai and the Malloi is a standing proof of it.

THE SOURCES

The sources for the study of our subject fall under two heads—literary and archæological. The first, again, may be subdivided into (a) indigenous and (b) foreign. The indigenous literary sources comprise first, the various branches of the Vedic literature. The Vedic literature contains many stray references to the method of warfare, the organisation of the army, the building of forts and strongholds and the weapons of offence and defence generally used. These are, however, incidental in character, for, the main concern of this body of literature was about the religious beliefs and practices of the people, and these do not help us materially except filling in gaps in the historic chain by drawing certain plausible conclusions. These sacred books of the Hin-

2 *Strabo.* XV. C. 701.

dus, being essentially those of religion and philosophy, do not supply us with a mass of useful information bearing on military ideas and practices in those far-off days.

Next to the Vedic literature come the two Sanskrit Epics, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata, and the Purāṇas. The two epics being war poems embody materials which are essential for the compilation of a military code and preservation of a military tradition of the period which is, for a variety of reasons, anterior to that of the Mauryas and of the classical authors and Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra.[3] The Purāṇic literature also supplies us with valuable information about various military matters. One cannot afford to ignore the Buddhist Pāli works, particularly the Jātakas or the Birth Stories. These books composed in the Buddhist and post-Buddhist times contain pieces of information about the growth of cities,—their boundaries and outwork, the story of struggle for power among states in Northern India,—the account of trade routes, and sea voyages. These books again show that the ancient Indians were in close touch with the sea and realised the importance of coastal towns for purposes of commercial expansion, if not for territorial defence. To the third class of literary sources belong the works on Arthaśāstra and Nītiśāstra. The most important work on Arthaśāstra or the Art of Government is that attributed to Kauṭilya, the celebrated minister of Candragupta. The latter, as the contemporary and later evidence abundantly proves, built up a huge empire extending from the foot of the Himalayas in the north to the Podiyil hill in the south.[4] This empire was ably maintained by an efficient standing army paid directly by the

3 AWAI (Intro.), pp. IV. & V.

4 K. Aiyenger : Beginnings of South Indian History, p. 89.

crown.[5] The Kauṭilyan Arthaśāstra is an excellent treatise on statecraft. It is a mine of information. It describes the formation of the army and the relative importance of its different branches. It speaks of different methods of warfare, of different types of weapons, of battle arrays, of sieges, of spies and poison gas. It devotes two long chapters (IX & X) to War. The Nītisāra of Kāmandaka (composed in the 8th century A.D.), the Nītivākyāmṛta of Somadeva Sūri (composed in the 10th century A.D.), the Yukti-Kalpataru attributed to King Bhoja of Dhārā in Malwa who reigned in the 11th century and the Mānasollāsa attributed to King Someśvara III who flourished in the Deccan between 1127 and 1138, are higly informative works, and give a wealth of detail about certain aspects of the art of war. The importance of two other late works on statecraft, viz. the Nītisāra of Śukra and the Nīprakāśikā of Vaiśampāyana has been minimised on the ground that they contain reference to guns and gunpowder and consequently composed not earlier than the 16th century.[6] There are some interesting Sanskrit texts on Dhanurveda which throw considerable light on the art of warfare necessary to defend territories and annex dominions.

The archæological sources include the remains of ruined towns, sculpture, paintings, coins and inscriptions. Inferences drawn from the study of these have yielded trustworthy materials bearing on military practices in anciet India. The archæological finds at Hārāppā and Mohenjo-dāro have given us a list of weapons used some 4,500 years ago. The late Mr. N. G. Majumdar after examining the objects re-

5 Cf. Megasthenes' fifth class. Meg. Frag. XXXVI.

6 Keith: History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 464. With regard to the latter Dr. P. C. Chakravarti (AWAI, p. IX) holds a different view.

covered by him in two other sites, (Ali Murad and Kohtras Buthi) stated, "The Cyclopean wall with which the area is girt and protected suggests its being the site of a fortress."[7] As a result of his further excavation at Hārāppā, (1946) Sir Mortimer Wheeler speaks of the citadel defences.[8] The equipment of an Indian infantry is discernible on the Begur stone sculpture[9] and the bas-reliefs at Sāñchi and Bhārhut. In the fresco paintings at Ajantā soldiers are found carrying swords or spears in their right hand and shields in their left.[10] Inscriptions of many periods of ancient Indian history throw light on such things as the composition, numerical strength and equipment of Indian army. The Śātavāhana coins bear the figure of a two-masted sailing ship.[11]

The foreign sources constitute the writings of three classes of authors, viz.:

(1) Greek and Latin.
(2) Chinese.
(3) Muslim.

The notices of Alexander's historians,—the writings of Greek envoys and those of Arrian, Diodorus, Pliny, Q. Curtius, etc. are by far the most illuminating source for the study of the subject under review. Their accounts bristle with details about the method of warfare as practised in India in the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C., and in them we often notice attempts at elucidation of causes of success and failure in open clashes.

The Chinese source comprising the accounts left particularly by Fa-hien and Hiuen Tsang does not help us much

7 MASI No. 48, pp. 132-33.

8 Ancient India, Vol. III, pp. 63-64.

9 Ep. Ind. VI. opp., p. 46.

10 Lady Herringham: Ajantā Frescoes, Pl. XVII & XXII.

11 Rapson: Catalogue of Indian Coins, p. 22.

except a general review of the Indian army and warlike habits of the people. Their attention was directed more to matters religious and social than to political or military.

The Muslim chroniclers are generally of great importance, as they have sought to give graphic pictures of the gradual conquest of Hindusthān by the armies of Islam, although not without biased commentaries on Hindu defence. We are in complete agreement with Dr. Chakravarty when he observes,—They (the Early Muhammedan chroniclers) lack the range and catholicity of classical writers, and they usually present only one side of the picture.[12]

With the above-mentioned sources at our disposal an attempt will be made to sketch a tolerably consistent and chronological account of ancient Indian military system,—its merits and demerits, and finally to examine how far the art of war as practised in ancient times was fitted into the theory so profusely laid down in the Epics, Arthaśāstra and Nīti-śāstra in the shape of instructions to Rāṣṭrapatis.

12 AWAI, p. III.

CHAPTER ONE

STRUGGLE FOR POWER AND SUPREMACY AMONG THE VEDIC TRIBES

THE ART OF WARFARE IN THE VEDIC AGE (Circa 1500-600 B.C.)

1. *Āryan-Dāsa Conflict.*

With the problem of Indian chronology still unsettled we begin the subject of our enquiry from the Vedic Age. According to western scholars whose labours in the domain of Indology deserve unstinted praise, the Vedic Age of India extends from c. 1500 to 600 B.C.[1] It was essentially an age of emigration, settlement and expansion in India of the Aryan tribes who are supposed to have entered the country from some other region.[2] "Like the Germans invading Italy, these Aryans were rather immigrants than conquerors. But they brought with them strong physiques, a hearty appetite in both solids and liquids, a ready brutality, a skill and courage in war, which soon gave them the mastery of

1 Max Muller fixes 1200-1000 B.C. as the date of the beginning of the Vedic poetry. Macdonell (Sanskrit Lit., p. 12) and Keith (CHI Vol. I, pp. 111-12) have supported Max Muller. Tilak and Yacobi pushed the date back on astronomical grounds. Dr. H. C. Ray Chaudhuri (Studies in Indian Antiquities, p. 19) says that 'the date of the rise of one at least of the Ṛgvedic kingdoms cannot possibly be pushed further back than the second millennium B.C.'

2 According to B. G. Tilak the original habitat of the Aryans lay on Artic region. C.H.I. places it on the Danube.

northern India......They wanted land and pasture for their cattle, their word for war said nothing about national honour, but simply meant 'a desire for more cows.' (Will Durant: The Story of Civilisation, p. 397).

Our information about the period,—political, social, economic and religious, is solely based on the Vedic literature. The Ṛgveda is the earliest literary record of the Indo-Aryan race, and as such gives us an insight into the method of warfare along with other things of great value. For a time, there was much fighting and severe struggle for power and supremacy among the Vedic tribes. The Vedic hymns are replete with accounts of continual warfare among the Aryans and the complete Aryanisation of the land could not be effected before several centuries had elapsed. We hear of frequent clashes between the Aryans and the Aryans, between the Aryans and the non-Aryans who have been variously described as Dāsas, Dasyus or Anāsaḥ. The Ṛgvedic God (Indra) is conceived as an eminent warrior and a great leader of tribes, the thunderbolt wielder (R. V. I. 32). He is addressed as a Śūra possessing heroism. He pulled down the strongholds of Dasyus, scattering their numberless army (A.V. VIII. 8. 1-7). "He whom both battle lines call upon in the fray, both adversaries on this side and on that, he whom they invoke, standing on chariots, that, O men, is Indra."[3] "Thou, O Indra, dost strike the foes, both Aryan and the Dasyu."[4]......The warriors who leagued together against us, whether kindred or strange, break their might."[5] "Whatever contemners of the gods, be they Dāsa, be they Ārya, O, glorious Indra, do battle against them, give us an easy victory over them, thy foes."[6] "They (Indra

3 R.V. II. 12. 8.
4 *Ibid.* VI. 33. 3.
5 *Ibid.* VI. 25. 3.
6 *Ibid.* X. 38. 3.

and Agni) strike the foes, both Aryan and Dāsa."[7] Indra is thus the god par excellence, and 'an ever-fighting and never conquered hero'.

2. *Tribal Confederations.*

The Anus, Yadus, Pūrus, Turvaśas and Druhyus are the five earliest tribes (pañcajanāh)[8] who figure prominently in the Ṛgveda. Other tribes like the Bharatas, Tṛtsus, Śṛñjayas, Pañcālas, Matsyas, Uśīnaras, etc., became prominent later on. Of the five Ṛgvedic tribes the Pūrus, living on the Sarasvatī, were destined to play a very important part in the later Vedic history. As the expansion of these tribes proceeded, there developed tribal confederations for offence and defence. Divodāsa, father or grandfather of Sudāsa of the Tṛtsu family of the Bharata[8a] tribe had conflicts with the Turvaśas, Yadus and Pūrus.[9] He also fought successfully with the Paṇis, the Pārāvatas and the Bṛśayas. One of the outstanding events in Vedic military history was the Battle of the Ten Kings.[10] It was an engagement on the bank of the river Parusnī. Sudāsa, son or grandson of Divodāsa and leader of the Bharata tribe, inflicted a defeat on a confederation of ten enemy kings, some coming from the north-west. In this battle the Anu and Druhyu kings were drowned and another killed in action. This bloody encounter was the outcome af the rivalry between the two priests,—Vaśiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra and the confederation of the ten kings against

7 *Ibid* VI. 60. 6. 8 *Ibid* VIII. 6. 46, 48.

8a It is interesting to note that Ludwig has identified the Bharatas with the Tṛtsus. According to Geldner the Tṛtsus were the royal family of the Bharatas and this is considered by Dr. A. D. Pusalker to be the correct view. (Vedic India, p. 246).

9 *Ibid* IX. 61. 2 10 *Ibid* VII. 18. 33, 83.

Sudāsa was organised by the latter. The selection of river banks as the theatre of battles and device of driving the enemies into the river appear to be one mode of Aryan warfare. After this victory Sudāsa seems at once to have been compelled to return to the east of his kingdom to meet the attacks of a King, Bheda under whom three tribes, the Ajaś, Śigrus and Yakshus were united and to have defeated his new assailants with great slaughter on the Yamunā."[11] The success of the Bharatas in the battle of ten kings increased their prestige and made them pre-eminent among the Aryan tribes. This is the reason why Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa says,—"The greatness of the Bharatas neither the men before nor those after them attained." Apart from the story of continuous conflict among themselves the Aryan folks had encounters with the non-Aryans and this eventually led to the extension of their eastern frontier. "He (Indra) smote the Dasyus, and gave protection to the Aryan colour."[12] Divodāsa, king of the Tṛtsu family of the Bharata tribe, inflicted a stunning defeat upon a Dāsa chieftain Śambara.[13] The Bharatas under Viśvāmitra organised an expedition against the Kīkatas, a non-Aryan people residing in South Bihar or Magadha. In the campaign against the Dāsas, the Bharatas acted in concert with their rivals the Pūrus, "one of whose kings bore the significant name of Trasadasyu, i. e. Terror to the Dasyus." The wars which the Vedic tribes waged against the people whom they found in India were not always aggressive. Their were wars of necessity. "They came into effective conflict with the people

11 R.V. III. 33. 53, 9—12.

12 *Ibid* III. 34. 9.

13 *Ibid* I. 136, 7;
II. 11, 12;
VI. 26, 5;
VII. 18, 20.

alien to their culture who would not suffer the intrusion of foreigners into their ancient and simple habitat. It was natural that they rose in revolt and the intruding tribes were forced to defend themselves against the armed attacks of the natives of the soil. Thus, the defence complex fired their psychological impulses, and the result was the outbreak of hostilities."[14]

3. *Evolution of Tribal Kingship*

In course of time the Bharata tribe grew powerful and defeated the Pūrus. In the later Vedic period the Bharatas and the Pūrus coalesced to form Kuru nation[15] whose exploits fill the pages of romantic epic tale. "The Paurava connection of the Kurus is suggested by the Ṛigvedic hymn (X. 33. 4) which refers to 'Kuru Śravaṇa' as a descendant of Trasadasyu, a famous king of the Pūrus. The connection of the Bharatas with the Kurus is also attested by Vedic evidence."[16] Tribal wars and rumours of wars often disturbed the peaceful tenor of Vedic life. Thus, war played a large part in the life of the Vedic Aryans. The hymns of the Vedas describe a state of perpetual war in which kingship was a necessary institution. There are several theories regarding the origin of kingship (Śat. Br. V. 3. 3; Mabht. Śānti P. Rājadharma Sec. Chaps. 59 and 67), but the one that it arose out of the elaborated authority of the successful military leader describes the real state of affairs and seems historically sound. We have the following account in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (I. 14).

14 Dikshitar—War in Ancient India, p. 3.

15 V.I. Vol. I. 167. 322.
Oldenberg—Buddha, pp. 406-409.

16 PHAI, 5th Ed., p. 23.

blies, Roman Comitia Centuriata and the assemblies of the Teutonic nations.

(c) It disappeared as a useful organ of the administration as the states grew in size and royal authority increased.

(d) The Sabhā continued to exist, and in the historical period it reappeared as an aristocratic body in the shape of the King's Council or the Mantripariṣad mentioned in the Mahābhārata and the Arthaśāstra.[24]

4. *Territorial Expansion*

It is obvious from the Nadīstuti[25] (River hymn) of the Ṛgveda that the Aryans at first settled in the Kabul valley and the Punjab. In the period of the later Saṁhitās, Brāhmaṇas, etc. (c. 1000—600 B.C.) the Aryandom had been shifted from Northwest India and the Punjab to the Gangetic plain,—the land between the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā,—the so-called Madhyadeśa. "The Gangetic plain was the stronghold of the older population. The Aryan invasion of this tract had, therefore, to be attempted in large masses, so as to make attack or defence successful. Large communities took the place of the old Aryan tribes and the old tribal heads were replaced by powerful leaders of national levies."[26] The Bharatas, who did much fighting and won fresh laurels in the earlier period and advanced as far east as the land of the Kāśis, now recede into the background, although the echo of their military exploits is heard in a passage of the Śatapatha

24 Śāntiparva, Chap. 35.
Kauṭ., p. 33.
25 R.V. X. 75.
26 R. S. Aiyenger—History of India, Pt. I, pp. 25-26.

Brāhmaṇa. Bharata Daushanti, son of nymph Śakuntalā defeated the Śatvants winning victories on the banks of the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā.[27] Śātrājira defeated Dhṛtarāṣṭra, a powerful king of the Kāśis.[28] A later descendant of Pratīpa mentioned in the Atharvaveda was Janamejaya whose horse-sacrifice is solemnized in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. The Age of the Kuru-Pañcālas[29] in Madhyadeśa was dawning. They are located definitely in the Middle country or Madhyadeśa.[30]

The war with the aborigines and the struggle for supremacy among the various Vedic tribes resulted in the Aryan conquest of Northern India and establishment of not one but a number of Janarājyas. The Kuru-Pañcālas appear on the stage of history as a united nation in the Brāhmaṇa period, and a period of territorial expansion at once began. The Kurus (*i.e* the Bharatas, the Pūrus and other allied tribes of the Ṛg-vedic times)[31] founded a kingdom near about the modern Delhi with their capital at Āsandivat. The Pañcālas occupied the land to the north of the Kuru country with their capital at Kāmpilya (near Bareilly, Budaun Farukhabad and the adjoining district of the U.P.).[32] The Kośalas became supreme in Ayodhyā (Oudh) on the river Sarayū. The Matsyas flourished in the Jaipur region. The Śūrasenas rose to prominence

27 Śat. Br. XIII. 5. 4. 11.

28 *Ibid* XIII. 5. 4. 19-23.

29 'The external history of the Pañcālas is mainly that of wars and alliances with the Kurus. The Mahābhārata preserves traditions of conflict between the Kurus and the Pañcālas. We are told by the Epic that Uttar-Pañcāla, was wrested from the Pañcālas by the Kurus and given away to their preceptor.' PHAI, 5th Ed., p. 73.

30 Ait Br. VIII. 14.

31 Śat. Br. II. 4. 4. 5.

32 PHAI, p. 70

in the Mathurā area. The Kāśis raised their head in Vārāṇasī; and in the east the Vedehas grew powerful with their capital at Mithilā in North Bihar. There are reasons to believe that of the kingdoms and peoples mentioned in the Vedic texts, the Kurus enjoyed a sort of primacy among others under their King Janamejaya, who performed Aśvamedha sacrifice and annexed Takṣaśīlā.[33] Next in order of succession, the Kingdom of Videha with its capital at Mithilā came to the forefront under the 'Philosopher King' Janaka, who bore the title of Samrāṭ. Supremacy then passed to and was retained by Kośala, which for a time contested with the Kāśis for control over Madhyadeśa until the rise of Magadha to overmastering power under Bimbisāra. This is how Dr. H. C. Ray Chaudhuri of the Calcutta University has tried by his profound scholarship to establish a rational link in the chain of political events from the later Vedic times to the advent of the Śiśunāgas under Śreṇika Bimbisāra in the middle of the sixth century B.C.[34] The imperialistic idea was embedded in the Ṛgveda itself (III.55.7.56.5 IV.21.1 VI.27.8. VIII. 19.32). The Magadhan expansion was a corollary to it.

In Dakṣiṇāpatha (the Deccan) the progress of the Aryans was rather slow. The first Aryan province in trans-Vindhyan India appears to have been *Vidarbha* or Berar. Other Aryan settlements like Daṇḍaka, Assaka, Kaliṅga also arose.[35] Non-Aryan (Dasyu) tribes like the Andhras, the Pulindas, the Śabaras and also Mūtibas existed.[36] According to Sir R. G. Bhandarkar,[37] the Aryans had become familiar with the

33 Mbht. I. 3. 20.

34 Vide PHAI 5th ed. relevant chapters in Part I.

35 The rest of the Deccan was in Dasyu hands. *Ibid.* p. 92.

36 Ait. Br. VII. 18.

37 Early History of the Dekkan, p. 16.

whole country down to Tanjore and Madura by 350 B.C. During the Aryan occupation of the Deccan land (Dakṣiṇāpatha) excluding the Tamil countries of the Far South which remained unsubdued, there were frequent clashes with the aborigines, and in their struggle for existence the northern invaders passed through varied political fortunes till the unification of the Deccan was brought about in the first century B.C.[38] under the Sātavāhanas or the so-called Andhras of the Purāṇas.

5. *Rise of the Warrior Caste: Kṣatriyas*

With the expansion of the Aryandom eastward, westward and southward in the post-Brāhmaṇic period and the rise of warlike kings and princes, there emerged a nobility skilled in the art of war, and on this class devolved the duty of defending the realm from outside aggression and internal discord. As this class came to display a fighting capacity and sturdy valour, it created a name, and before long set up a separate class, the Kṣatriya or the Rājanya.[39] By way of digression a word may be said here about the Aryan social institution, the caste. In the Ṛgvedic period we find the earliest conception of the threefold or even fourfold division of the community,— viz. Brāhmaṇas representing 'holy power,' Kṣatriyas representing 'kingly power' and Vaiśyas representing the community of traders. According to most scholars,[40] caste with its restrictions on diet, marriage and pro-

38 For the date of Simuka see PHAI, 5th Ed, p. 408.

39 The term 'Ksatra' is to be found in R. V. I. 24. 11., II. 136. 1-3; IV. 17. 1.; V. 62. 6. and 'Ksatriya' in R. V. IV. 12.3.; 42. 1.; V. 69. 1; VII. 64. 2.; VIII. 25. 8.

40 "The words 'Brāhmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaiśyas and Sūdras were names of classes rather than of castes during the pre-Bud-

fession developed in the later Vedic period.[41] The Puruṣa-sūkta hymn (R.V.X. 90) which is supposed to state the origin of caste gives "merely a philosophical explanation,—a theory of creation," and nothing more. The fourth caste or the servile caste arose possibly with the admission of the non-Aryans or Dāsas into the Aryan social system. "The admission," writes K. V. R. Aiyenger, "of the rude non-Aryan tribes within the pale of the Aryan social system prevented grave racial struggles, while their relegation to the lowest class in the scheme saved the Indo-Aryan element from being overwhelmed by the superior numbers of the aborigines."[42] From the division of the people into four classes with well-defined duties we may infer that the Aryans felt even in that remote age the necessity of an organised self-defence. In the period of Brāhmanical ascendancy the fighting class or the Rājanyas had been created, and its contribution towards the extension and consolidation of Aryan realms must have been very great. While the Aryans were still in the tribal stage, the people was called viś (lit. clan). But this period of the Aryan settlement in India was really the time of continuous warfare. Accordingly, the fighting people grouped themselves into several clans and came to be known as 'Rājanyas' and the class itself turned out to be Kṣatriyas.[43] The duties of the Kṣatriyas have been defined

dhistic period. Varṇa, once a common name of all classes......came to mean a caste in post-Buddhistic literature". Evolution of Caste. Shyāma Sāstrī. pp. 13—14.

41 For a detailed discussion on the subject of Apte: The Vedic Age. Vol. I. Chap. XXIII.

42 History of India. Pt. I, p. 30.; The Vedic Age, p. 355.

43 Studies in Indian Social Polity, p. 159.

in several Vedic texts.[44] "They were," writes Sri S. Radhakrishnan, "the defenders of society from external aggression and internal disorder. The military organisation of the state was entrusted to them. They were in charge of political arrangements. It was not the intention of the Hindu Dharma to make the entire body of the people act as a general militia."[45] The Kṣatriyas or Rājanyas of the Ṛgvedic period probably constituted a hereditary class. It is necessary to remove at the very outset a common misconception regarding the fighting classes in ancient India. "The notion that the military profession was the exclusive monopoly of the Kṣatriyas caste" is baseless, and this is true of the statement made by Wheeler (History of India I. p. 77.) "that except in some widely supernatural legends, the Brāhmaṇas are not represented as warriors."[46] While discussing the psychological background of war in ancient India Prof Diskshitar[47] states,—"Being born warriors and barred by rules from taking to other professions, the Kṣatriyas were impatient of peace. In fact, it is the psychological barrenness of peace that led to many wars in India's ancient history." We do not, however, share his views. This war-mindedness was not true of all periods of India's ancient history nor was it peculiar to India alone. The Aryans were compelled to wage countless wars no doubt, and these were not always wars of extermination in the proper sense of the word. Their penetration into the South, for example, was peaceful and not undertaken with sword in hand.[48]

44 V. I.' Vol. I, p. 202.
45 The Heart of Hindusthan., p. 33.
46 AWAI, p. 78.
47 War in A. I. p. 11.
48 Carmichael Lectures, First Series, 1918.

6. *Army Organisation & Methods of Warfare*

Passing on now to the consideration of the army organisation in the early Vedic times we find that the Vedic King had no standing army. The Hindu monarchical state did not possess standing armies before the sixth century B. C. If Jayaswal is to be believed, it was essentially a civil state and never became a military polity. (Hindu Polity P. IV. 189). In times of war with neighbouring countries and tribes, he had to depend upon local levies who brought their own arms and weapons and were led by their own chief.[49] A general levy of the entire mass was absent, although the Cambridge History of India seems to believe that all the men of the tribe took part in the war.[50] Profs. Macdonell and Keith[51] say that "In war the Vaiśyas must have formed the bulk of the forces under the Kṣatriya leaders. They, however, reject the theory of Zimmern that the Vedic host fought according to clan (viś), village (grāma) and family (Alt. Leben. p. 162). The theory had its basis on the terms like Śardha. Vrāta and Gaṇa.[52] It is interesting to note that the Vedic literature contains no reference to India's traditional four-fold army—i.e. the caturaṅgabala and caturaṅgacamū of the Mahābhārata. The army of the Vedic age consisted of Patti (foot soldiers) and Rathins (car warriors). In connection with the coronation ceremony described in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (V. 3. 1.) Senānī (Commander-in-chief), and Sūta (charioteer) are mentioned among the Ratnins or

49 A. C. Das—Ṛgvedic Culture, pp. 340-41.

50 CHI Vol. I, p. 98. 51 V. I. Vol II, p. 334.

52 Dr. Apte (The Vedic Age, p. 355) infers from these terms the knowledge of battle-arrays of different types. They denoted at least different military units.

'jewels,'—apparently as members of the king's military service. It was only in the post-Vedic period that the employment of cavalry (mounted soldiers) and elephants came into vogue. In the Ṛgveda the elephant was regarded as a wild animal, and it was not used for war. There is no mention of the horse being used in war.[53] Dr. A. C. Das[54] seems to believe that horses were used in battle in the Ṛgvedic period. Dr. P. C. Chakravarty,[55] however, does not agree with him as the quotations cited by the former in support of his contention are not very convincing. Thus, it is clear that infantry and car-worriors fighting from chariots formed the regular feature of the Vedic military organisation. Not only in ancient India, the same was the practice all over the ancient world. As regards the size of the armies brought into the field during the Aryan-Dāsa struggle, the Vedic poets mention large numbers fighting especially on the side of the Dasyus and destroyed by Indra, the Ṛgvedic God of Battle. In Ṛgveda (I.53.9) the number given is 60,000; in R.V. IV. 16. 13. it is 50,000, and in R.V. IV. it is 30,000 (Muir—Original Sanskrit Text, Vol. V, p. 471). How battles were fought in early Vedic period is clear from the description of Kaegi:[56]

> "When an enemy approaches the Aryan boundaries, earthworks are thrown up, a barricade of timbers created, impassable bulwarks of bronze made and sacrifices offered to the gods to secure their help. Then the army advances with loud battle-songs with the sound of drums and trumpets, with waving banners against the opposite force.

53 CHI Vol. I, p. 137.

54 Ṛgvedic Culture, pp. 223-26.

55 AWAI, p. 33.

56 The Ṛgveda Intr., p. 19.

The warrior stands at the left of the chariot, and beside him the charioteer, and the footsoldiers fight in close lines, village beside village, tribe beside tribe. The warrior is protected by brazen coat of mail and helmet; with the bow he hurls against the enemy feathered arrows with poisoned tips of horn or metal, or presses on with spear, and axe, lance and sling. And when the enemy is conquered, loud rejoicing resounds with the beat of drums, like the noise of the rising storm; the sacred fire is kindled to offer to the gods a song and sacrifice of thanksgiving, and then to divide the spoil."

The Aryans seem to have frequently raided neighbouring territories in quest of booty besides ordinary wars of defence and conquest.[57] One possible method of siege warfare consisted in setting fire to surrounding walls of wood[58] as the Peloponnesians did in connection with the siege of Plataea.[59]

From the military point of view the part which the Purohita (king's chaplain) played as the king's wellwisher and adviser seems interesting enough. In the Vedic age the king was encouraged in battle by the purohita with prayers and mantras. According to the Sūtra Literature (Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra III. 12) before a battle ensuès the purohita stands to the west of the chariot and chants mantras appropriate to the occasion from the Ṛgveda. He himself arms the king with bow, arrow and armour and even recites mantras over the horses. He was to be fully conversant with Śastra (military art), Śāstra (rituals) and Daṇḍanīti. We know from the same source that the king "should com-

57 V. I. Vol. II, p. 417.
Sāyana's interpretation of R. V. X. 142. 4.

58 R. V. VII, 5. 3.

59 Thucy. tr., p. 115.

mence the battle in the formation invented by Āditya or by Uśanas." It is, therefore, beyond the range of doubt that the ritual literature is not wholly innocent or battle arrays and war tactics.

As to the equipment of the Vedic infantry, our information is so scanty that nothing can be stated definitely. In Ancient Greece heavy-armed footmen were employed by Sparta during the Messenian war. Formerly infantry fought in an old fashioned manner. Each soldier took part in action not in an orderly manner but as courage and opportunity might afford. So no united effort was made to ensure success, and in the new method adopted later by the Spartans and others "regiments of mailed foot-lancers marched and fought in close ranks."[60] Like a combatant on a chariot overcoming men fighting on foot, Agni is represented in the Atharvaveda as conquering the most powerful enemies.[61] This analogy seeks to minimise the importance of the infantry in relation to the charioteer. In all probability, the personal ability of a car-warrior counted more than the overwhelming number of footmen in a battle. The role of Indian footsoldiers, as embodied *especially in the Epic literature*, is not commendable. They fell in thousands without contributing practically anything to the decisian of battles. The Vedic and Epic military tactics bear a close resemblance to those followed in Mediæval Europe when feudalism was at its height.[62]

Considerable difficulty is experienced in the matter of stating what the Vedic arms and weapons exactly were. But

60 Bury: History of Greece for beginners, p. 31.

61 A. V. VII., 62. 1.

62 AWAI. pp. 15-16.

the principal weapon in those days certainly were the bow and the arrow. There are frequent references to them in the Ṛgveda.[63] The importance attached to the bow as the weapon of offence and defence is only too apparent. It is no exaggeration to say that the history of the bow as the most effective weapon of war goes to the distant past and it retained its usefulness till the introduction of firearms, and to speak the truth, "throughout the ancient period it gave its name to military science (Dhanurveda) and proficiency in its use was the measure of a man's reputation as a warrior."[64] Apart from the bow and the arrow, we find mention of lances, spears, swords, axes and sling stones, but their use as defensive weapons does not seem to be very frequent.[65] The Atharvaveda (VIII. 8) speaks of the armament of weapons, snares, traps and nets to confuse the enemy and secure its discomfiture.

7. *Banners and War Music*

The Vedic heroes used banners in their wars. The word 'Dhvaja' (banner) occurs twice in the Ṛgveda (VII. 85. 2; X, 103, 11). Instruments used for war music are mentioned. We find references to Dundubhi (R. V. I. 10. 3) and Bankura (Pañcaviṁśa Br. V. 5. 19). The former was a kettledrum and an earthdrum and the latter was a musical instrument whose use is frequent in times of war.

8. *Forts and Arsenals*

It is worthwhile discussing if the people of the Vedic age did anything to build forts and arsenals as defensive measures

63 R. V. II, 24. 8; VIII. 7. 4; IX. 99; X. 18. 9, 125, 6 etc.
64 AWAI p. 132.
65 V. I. Vol. II, p 417

In those days of insecurity the Aryan tribes must have lived in awe of hostile attacks from the non-Aryan tribes whom they ultimately subdued and assimilated. There are many verses in the sacred book of hymns which prove that the non-Aryans or Dasyus possessed forts and strongholds in large numbers.[66] In the course of conquest and settlement the Indo-Aryans had to repel countless attacks from different parts of the country and we know that their opponents possessed forts. Hence it is quite possible that although the Aryans had no forts of their own, "the resources of fortification which they captured from the non-Aryans probably stood them in good stead, and they utilised them to the best of their ability."[67] It is difficult to throw light upon the nature of these strongholds, i. e. their size, shape and especially the material with which they were built. They are often described as made of stone (aśmamayī), sometimes of sun-dried bricks (arṇa, lit. raw. unbaked). They are also described as board and wide (pṛthvī and uṛvī).[68] According to one authority, "they were built of hardened earth with palisades, and a ditch."[69] Then again. there is a reference to 'the pur cariṣṇu, or moving fort (R. V. VIII. 1. 2-8) which may have been an engine for assaulting strongholds,' but Hildebrandt thinks that the pur carṣṇu of the Ṛgveda was a kind of chariot.[69a]

Dr. Mortimer Wheeler, the late Director General of Archæology, Government of India, noted, in his report on fresh discoveries in Hārāppā, 1946, the existence of massive fortifications. The principal mound at Hārāppā constituted a high citadel with a mud brick defence, 40 ft, wide and

66 R. V. II. 19, 6; 14. 6; 20. 8; IV. XXVI. 3.

67 AWAL. p. 128.

68 R. V. I. 189. 2.

69 V. I. I. p. 539.

69a *Ibid*, II, p. 417.

40 ft. high, faced externally by a wall of burnt brick. Dr. Wheeler[70] suggested that it was these fortifications which certain verses in the Ṛgveda credited Indra with having destroyed. "The Aryan invasion of the Land of the Seven Rivers, the Punjab and its environs," he writes, "constantly assumes the form of an onslaught on the walled cities of the aborigines.[71] For these cities, the term used in the Ṛgveda is pur meaning a rampart, fort or stronghold. One is called broad (pṛthvī) and wide (urvī). Sometimes strongholds are referred to metaphorically as of metal (āyasi). Autumnal (Śāradī) forts are also named. This may refer to the forts in that season being occupied against Aryan attacks or against inundations caused by overflowing rivers. Forts with a hundred walls (Śatabhujī) are mentioned...Indra, the Aryan War God is purandara, fort-destroyer. He shatters ninety forts for his Aryan protége, Divadāsa (I. CXXX. 7). The same forts are doubtless referred to where in other hymns he demolishes variously ninety-nine and a hundred 'ancient castles' of the aboriginal leader Sambara. In brief, he rends forts as age consumes a garment." But there is some difficulty in accepting the above as Aryan forts. Sir John Marshall regards the Indus Valley civilisation as something quite distinct in point of time and quality from the Vedic civilisation. The position becomes untenable unless we agree with the view advocated by Dr. Pusalker that 'the Ṛgvedic Aryans probably formed an important part of the populace in

70 Hārāppā—1946. Ancient India, Vol. III, p. 82.

71 The Hārāppā civilisation centred on fortified cities. The sudden fall of these cities makes, according to Stuart Piggott, the identification of the Dasyus and Dāsas with inhabitants (a large section of them being Proto-Austroloids) of Hārāppā and Māhenjodaro something near to a certainty. Prehistoric India. p. 161.

those days, and contributed their share to the evolution of the Indus Valley civilisation'.[72]

9. *Sea Navigation: Ships and Aerial Navigation*

When the entire Vedic period is taken into consideration and the researches done by a host of scholars are borne in mind, it can be safely asserted that the ancient Indians had the knowledge of sea navigation. Their spirit of adventure, so beautifully reflected in the *Jātakas*[73] and other texts, enabled them in pre-Christian era to undertake trading voyages to distant shores, across the seas and establish commercial relations with such countries as Assyria, Babylon, Arabia and the lands bordering on the Eastern Mediterranean and the region of the Eastern peninsula. Quite a different view is held with regard to the Ṛgvedic period. According to the Cambridge History of ancient India (Vol. 1. p. 79),—"The Indus was the natural outlet to the sea for the Aryan tribes, but in the period of the Ṛgveda there is no clear sign that they had yet reached the ocean. No passage even renders it possible that sea navigation was known." But scholars like Max Müller (SBE Chap. XXXII, pp. 61f), Macdonell and Keith (Vedic Index Vol. II. p. 422) have stated that ocean was known to the Vedic people. Boats and ships do occur in the earliest book of the Aryans.[74] "Do thou convey us in a ship across the sea for our welfare"[75] is a clear indication of sea-going vessels. The knowledge of the

72 The Vedic Age, I. p. 195.

73 Baveru Jāt (No 339), Valāhāsa Jāt (No. 196). Saṁkha Jāt. No. (422), Mahājanaka Jāt (No. 539).

74 R. V. I. 116. 5. *Ibid*, X. 101. 2. Also Sat. Br. IV. 2. 5. 10

75 *Ibid*, I. 17. 8.

high tide is often referred to in the Ṛgveda (I. 48. 3). The account of the Aśvins conveying the rescued bhujya by means of winged ships[76] leads Prof. Dikshitar[77] to think that it may refer to aerial navigation in the earliest time. This will be going too far. It is better to take it as a piece of poetic fancy. But 'acquaintance with the sea is rendered probable by reference to the 'treasures of the deep.' If the identification of the Vedic 'mana' with the Babylonian 'Manah' is correct, we have indubitable testimony to a very early intercourse between Vedic India and distant lands beyond the seas.'[78] Now the more important question,—a question which forms the corner-stone of India's seaward defence—the question whether and when Indians built ships for military operations in Indian seas and waterways, must remain vague and uncertain till one reaches the age of the Great Mauryas. Prof. Dikshitar[79] is of the opinion that ships for warfare existed on a modest scale even in the Ṛgvedic period. He finds reference to 'a ship sailing heavenward' in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. To credit the Vedic age with such progress in military science as the creation of a warmarine is rather fanciful. It will not be out of place here to make some observations on the circumstances which compelled the people of the ancient world to build ships for trade, colonisation, and conquest. The Phœnicians, belonging to the Semitic race, were perhaps the earliest colonising and commercial people. They built in the dim past merchant vessels to carry on trade with different parts of the then world. Their entire attention was focussed on trade and not on political domi-

76 R. V. I. 117
77 War in Ancient India, p. 278,
78 AHI, p. 35.
79 War in A. I., p. 191.

nion. By their wonderful skill in commerce and navigation they came to exercise an effective control over the Mediterranean world, thereby connecting the East and the West. Of the nations of the ancient classical world, the Hellenes were the prominent example of a seafaring nation who in the fifth century B.C. attained complete naval supremacy by founding colonies, building ships, constructing docks and harbours and organising a maritime league for national defence against the Barbarians. The Confederacy of Delos, which had come into being to clear the Aegean of the Persians, was ultimately transformed into a first class maritime empire under the hegemony of Athens. Although relying substantially upon their citizen-soldiers and legionaries, the Romans, too, felt the necessity of building for the safety of Italy a navy during their first clash with the Phoenicians in Sicily in the third century B.C. They, accordingly, built a fleet, defeated the Phoenicians and got possession of the Mediterranean islands adjacent to the Italian peninsula. The construction of a fleet was with the Romans, as Mommsen[80] says, 'a noble national work'. Phoenicia, Hellas and Rome were abundantly endowed by Nature to be the seats of maritime power. So was ancient India. But inspite of her peninsular position and despite the fact that her shores are being washed by the waves of the everlasting sea, she has failed to become a maritime power throughout her long history. Certain natural disadvantages have stood in her way. Her coastline is no doubt extensive covering a distance of more than 3000 miles, but it is not indented or broken with small facilities for harbourage. The estuaries of her many rivers are generally unfit for navigation, the two chief obstacles

80 History of Rome, Vol. II. pp. 36-37.

being shallowness and silt. Although such is the general physical character of India, there are reasons to believe that some portions of this vast sub-continent, because of its natural advantages, showed evident signs of naval activities in ancient and early mediaeval times, These regions were *Bengal, the Valley of the Indus* and the *extreme south of the Deccan plateau,*— called *Drāvidadeśa,* the ancient name for the Tāmil country,—Tāmilakam. The maritime activities of these regions have been testified to by Indian literature, inscriptions and foreign accounts.[81]

10. *Weapons of Defence and Offence as gathered from the Remains of the Indus Valley Civilisation*

Before we close our account of the material pursuits of the Vedic Indians, it seems necessary to refer briefly to the magnificent (pre-Vedic?) Indus Valley civilisation. The people living in Sind and the Punjab and other adjoining areas evolved in the 3rd millennium B.C., a highly developed civilisation, but whether this civilisation called "Chalcolithic Culture" is pre-Vedic or post-Vedic is a difficult problem which still awaits solution.[82] There is evidence to prove that the authors of this civilisation whose achievements in the arts of peace were so surprising, must have paid close attention to war and chase. It has been possible to divide, as has been done by Dr. K. N. Dikshit (Pre-Historic Civilisation, pp. 31-32), the people of the Indus Valley into four classes,

81 Khalimpur C.P. of Dhatmapāla Ep. Ind. Vol. IV. 243ff. Deopārā Ins. of Vijayasena Ep. Ind. Vol. I. p. 306; CHI Vol. I. p. 594; South Ind. Ins. Vol. II p. 241 n 1.; also Vol. III. pt. 1, pp. 4-6; The Periplus of the Erythræan Sea describes Indian ports, harbours and merchandise in the first century A.D.

82 General Conclusions—AHI pp. 21-23.

viz., the learned class, the warrior class, the traders and artisans and the manual labourers, but the survival of the 'Warrior Class' has been denied by archaeologists. The following weapons of war are said to have been used by the people of the time:

(1) Axes[83]
(2) Spears
(3) Daggers
(4) Bows
(5) Arrows
(6) Maces
(7) Slings.

The use of the sword and arrows was probably unknown[84] Defensive weapons like shield and helmet are not met with. All offensive weapons were generally made of copper and bronze. Concerning the use of defensive and offensive weapons by the people in the Mycenaean stage of the prehistoric Aegean culture (c. 1600-1100 B. C.) unearthed by Schliemann and Sir Arthur Evans.—J. Bury[85] writes:

> "The arms with which the men of Mycenae attacked their foes were sword, spear and bow. Their defensive armour consisted of huge helmets, probably made of leather, and shields of oxhide. The princes went for war in two-horsed chariots which consisted of a board to stand on and breast work of wicker."

A careful examination of the defensive and offensive weapons used by the people of the Indus Valley as well as by Vedic Indians,—the method of warfare, the role of the Bow

83 Plate XXII Chanu-daro.

84 Vide—Mackay—Early Indus Civilisations 2nd Ed. revised by D. Mackay, Chap. V, p. 93. Plate XXIII—Bronze Sword—Mohenjo-dāro.

85 History of Greece for Beginners, p. 13.

and the Arrow, the Rathin and Patti, the growth of well-guarded cities,—the utilisation of massive fortifications and a due consideration of the fact that the Vedic age, especially the later one, was marked by the fierce struggle for supremacy and speedy expansion of the Aryan territories in Madhyadeśa, Prāchī, Udīchī, Pratīchī and Dakṣiṇāpaṭha,[86] would tend to give the impression that ancient India's military system which was to take shape in the Epic and Purāṇic literature, was coming more and more into the picture.

86 A five-fold division of the country appears in Ait. Br. VIII. 14: A. V. XIX. 17. 1. 9.

CHAPTER TWO

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MILITARY SYSTEM AS OUTLINED IN THE EPIC AND PURĀṆIC LITERATURE

(Circa 500 B.C.—400 A.D.)

Every nation has its earliest history,—a history of its hard struggle with Nature and hostile tribes, wonderfully mixed up with legends, traditions, tales and myths. This legendary history, it may be presumed, takes in course of time a concrete shape and appears as Heroic poetry. The beginnings of Indian Epic poetry may be traced to the later Vedic texts which contain legends (Itihāsa)[1], myths, and songs in praise of heroes (gāthā nārāśaṁsī). Fragments of legends and songs were gathered together, given a definite shape, and ultimately became an Epic, glorifying the hero and through him the nation to which he belonged. The two national Epics of ancient India are the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata. The original portions of these two great books, being of great antiquity, represent the Heroic Age of ancient India, and incidentally deal with the expansion, conquest and civil wars of the Indo-Aryans in the post-Vedic period. As the Epics often present a confusedly different political, social, religious and military background from that in the Vedas, the period may be for convenience called the Epic Age, otherwise the appellation becomes chronologically meaningless. The Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata took several hundred years to reach their present form, and consequently interpolations and additions have come in.

1 'Purāṇa', Itivṛtta (history), Akhyāyikā (tales). Udāharaṇa, (illustrated stories), Dharmaśāstra and Arthaśāstra are (known by the name) Itihāsa. Kaut. S. Sastry's tr., p. 10.

The date,[2] priority and interrelation[3] of the two Epics have engaged the attention of many eminent scholars like Macdonell, Keith, Hopkins, Wilson and Winternitz, and each has recorded his own views, but no finality has yet been reached. They are, after all, heroic tales—essentially War Epics. The Rāmāyaṇa describes, the conflict between Rāma, King of Ayodhyā and Rāvaṇa, King of Laṅkā,—a fascinating story supposed to be connected with the account of the Aryan penetration in the South. The Rāmāyaṇa describes Rāma's expedition to the South. This may be regarded as the extension of the Aryan sphere of influence over the lands of Vānaras and the Rākṣasas. The Mahābhārata story centres round the Bhārata War,—a full-scale civil war between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas for political dominance. The period which they represent is redolent of battle cries and war drums and all that they meant. The Mahābhārata, often regarded as an Epic, a law-book and a Purāṇa, is a storehouse of information and gives a mass of materials touching on military science and practice. A critical examination of these materials as preserved in the Epic and Purāṇic literatures, when carefully done, would enable us to conclude that the military tradition of the times continued without break right up to the end of the Hindu period and that it must be looked upon as *the solid founda-*

2 The Age of Epics varies between 5th Century B. C. and 4th Century A. D. For opinions on the subject vide Macdonell—History of Sanskrit Literature, pp. 285-287, 300. Hopkins—The Great Epic of India, pp. 336-402. CHI. I. p. 258. I.A. 1884, p. 229.

3 For a discussion on the inter-relations of the two Epics, see Dr. H. C. Ray Chaudhuri's 'Studies in Indian Antiquities' pp. 25-34.

tion on which the later Hindu Military System was based and remodelled according to circumstances.

The eighteen Purāṇas[3a] "which embody the Ksatriya tradition of ancient India" may be considered a useful source of information for military matters. In some of the Purāṇas we have copious references to weapons, methods and usages of warfare. Tbe historical value of the Purāṇic traditions and Epic tales have been doubted. It will be unjust to dismiss them wholesale as 'bardic tale'. European scholars have admitted the historical value of the Purāṇic traditions. Thus V. A. Smith[4] says,—' A close study finds in them much genuine and valuable historical tradition.' This is particularly true of the Dynastic lists contained in them.

As to the Kurukṣetra war or the war between the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas, European writers[5] do not doubt its authenticity and antiquity. Concerning the historicity of the Kuru kṣetra war Dr. H. C. Ray Chaudhuri[6] writes:

> "As to the Bhārata war, we have no epigraphic corroborations. ...Vedic literature contains many hints that the story of the great conflict is not wholly fictitious. Many of the principal figures in the Kurukṣetra story, e. g. Dhritrarāstra Vaichitravīrya and Kṛṣṇa Devakīputra are mentioned in some of the Vedic texts, and battle songs, describing the internecine strife among the Bharatas and the tragic end of Dhritrarāstra's progeny must have been current as early as the fifth century B. C."

3a While discussing the Age of the Purāṇas Dr. Smith writes, "I may add that Purāṇas in some shape were already authoritative in the fourth century B. C. "(EHI 4th Ed. Appendix).

4 E. H. I., 4th Ed., p. 12. 5 CHI. Vol. I, p. 307.

6 PHAI, 3rd Ed., p. 6 and 5th Ed., p. 7.

Carefully examining the dynastic lists contained in the Purāṇas, Pargiter (Ancient Indian Historical Traditions p. 182) fixes the date of the Bhāraṭa war at 950 B.C.

1 *Role of the Kṣatriyas* or *the Rājanyas*

In passing from the Vedic period to the time represented by the Epic and Purāṇic literature,—from the Vedic nobility (lesser tribal princes forming the warrior class) to the Epic-military caste, we notice a change in the social structure of the country and a predominance of the Kṣatriyas or the fighting class the members of which must attend to the defence of the country (prajānāṁ rakṣanaṁ). "The evidence of the Jātakas (Buddhist India by Rhys Davids, 52 et seq) points to the word 'Khattiya' denoting the members of the Aryan nobility who had led the tribes to conquest, as well as those families of the aborigines who had managed to maintain their princely status. In the Epic—JAOS 13.73 et. seq) the term 'Kṣatriya' seems to include all those persons, but probably it has a wider signification of the Khatriyas, and would cover all the royal military vassals and feudal chiefs expressing in fact, pretty much the same as the barones of early English History."[7] Onerous and sacred were the duties of the Kṣatriyas. They were to defend the realm, to protect the people and the Dharma, 'not to forget a kindness or a hurt,' not to back out when challenged to fight or gamble, and in the words of the Great Epic, they considered it a sin to die in bed.[8] Martial spirit was inborn in them.[9]

7 V. I. Vol. I, pp. 202-203.

8 For functions of the Kṣatriyas see also Manu X. 89.

9 'Sweet it is to die in battle; the path to heaven lies in fighting'. (Mabht. VIII. 93, 55).

2. *Division, Recruitment, Training, Salary, Allowance and Merits of the Army*

We notice a welcome change in the composition of the army, too. While the Vedic host cosisted of two divisions—Patti (foot soldier) and Rathin (Car warrior), the Epic army attained a fourfold[10] (Caturaṅgabala) or even an eightfold[11] division with the coming into use of horses and war elephants, etc. The four-fold division of the army is mentioned in both the Epics.[12] "Chariots, elephants, horses, infantry, burden-carriers, ships, spies with local guides as the eight—these are the open "limbs" of a fighting force, O descendant of Kuru." (Mabht. LIX. 41-42).

Let us now consider certain fundamental military practices. The question is—how was the army (footsoldiers) recruited? It is difficult to state if there were clear-cut rules of recruitment. Foot soldiers were probably drawn from all sorts of people including foreigners. In the Infantry it is the quantity rather than the quality that counted. The importance of the Infantry has been stressed again and again in both the Epics.[13] and the Purāṇas,[14] but of the four-fold division of the army it is the Chariot or rather the hero fighting from the chariot i.e. Rathī who was seen to play a most conspicuous and decisive part in the conduct of battles

10 The game of Chess which was played in India from the earliest times to the days of Alberūni probably had, according to Dr. Smith, its origin in the Caturaṅgabala.

11 Śānti Parva 103, 38. 'To the infantry, cavalry chariots and elephants were added Treasure (Koṣa) and machine (Yantra)).

12 Mabht. Banaparva 308. 11; Ram. Laṅkā Kāṇḍa 17. 24.

13 Sānti Parva, 100. 24.

14 Agni Purāṇa, 288. 7.

in the age of the Mahābhārata. He was a host in himself. In support of this, the words of Hopkins[15] may be quoted:

> "The Knight in his chariot is equal to an army. Frequently we find thousands running from one mounted hero. In case of a national hero, of course, no bounds are set in description. Through fear of Arjuna, everybody, even the Knights ran away; tke horse-riders abandoned their horse, the elephant-riders their elephants—falling from war-cars, elephants and horses."

This shows how the car-warriors described in the Udyogaparva of the Mahābhārata as Mahārathī, Rathī and Atirathī, enjoyed unchallenged supremacy in the military organisation of the Post-Vedic India.' In Epic literature we meet with Brāhmaṇa warriors. A Jātaka story (Śarbhanga Jātaka for example)[16] refers to the training of a Brāhmaṇa lad in archery. Thus, it will not be correct to say that one particular class alone enjoyed the privilege of being enrolled as fighters whether as car warriors or as footmen.

There are dissertations here and there in the Epics on the training merits and capabilities of soldiers. That there was an elaborate arrangement for the training of soldiers is evident from the Rāmāyaṇa.[17] The Sages collected in the royal assembly after the death of King Daśaratha in the course of their addresses to Vaśiṣṭha pointed out the evil that would befall a kingless state which would no longer hear the sound of the feet of heroes. "When the army is well trained," says the Śānti Parva,[18] "it does fighting quite well; untrained soldiers are worthless, therefore, considerate

15 JAOS Vol. 13. 261-62.

16 Cowell: The Jātaka—No. 522.

17 Ajodhyā Kāṇḍa 67.

18 Chap. XIX.

people properly train them." Rāvaṇa's speech to his Commander in-chief was more significant. "Hero! order my four-limbed army which is well trained in military arts to defend the city carefully against the enemy."[19] In the Mahābhārata there are references to military tournaments in which the military skill of the Kaurava and Pāṇḍava brothers was tested by their teacher, Droṇa.[20] Dhṛtarāṣṭra's speech on the quality of his armies shows their many-sided training.[21] Thus—'they are experts in climbing, riding, quick march, beating, entering and coming (out of a fort) and their skill in fighting on elephants, in horsemanship and charioteering has been tested.' Moreover, the Ādiparva mentions a sort of a forest University not far from human habitation or a town where young learners were to receive education and general training including military exercises.

Soldiers probably received fixed and regular salaries. The discontent among them for non-payment of salaries was guarded against.[22] Śukranīti writes—"The strength of the army is to be increased by good payments, that of arms and weapons by penances and regular exercises, and that of intelligence by the companionship of people learned in Śāstras."[23] There is a reference in the Sabhā parva (5. 57) and the Śāntiparva (86. 24) to the practice of granting an extra allowance in advance (marching allowance?) to the army personnel on the eve of an expedition and also the provision for the family of soldiers dying on the battle field.[24] Regu-

19 Ram. Yuddhakāṇḍa. 12.
20 Ādiparva 34—37.
21 Droṇaparva 5.,
22 Sabhāparva 5. 48—49.
23 B. K. Sarkar's tr. p. 218.
24 C/o Vāśiṣṭha's Dharmaśāstra XIX. 20. It is interesting to note that as late as the time of Śivāji this system was in vogue.

lar payment of soldiers is, according to the Purāṇic literature, a matter of supreme importance.[25] These matters have been dealt with in great detail in the works of Kauṭilya, Sukra and Kāmandaka[26]

3. *The Land beyond Madhyadésa: Eastern Monarchies*

As already stated, by the time of the later Saṁhitās and Brāhmaṇas the Aryan infiltration in Madhyadeśa was all but complete. The river Sadānīrā (Gondak) was reached—Kośala and Videha were occupied and Aryanised.[27] But the easternmost parts of India, which roughly formed the British province of Bengal, remained yet to be fully subdued. This is attested by Vedic evidence. The tribes like the Puṇḍras, Śuhmas, Vaṅgas were still outside the pale of the Vedic civilisation. These peoples were condemned as Dasyus or outlandish barbarians.[28] The Manusaṁhitā[29] also describes the Puṇḍras as degraded Ksatriyas. The Vedic account of the eastward drive of the Aryans and its references to non-Aryan tribes beyond Aryandom supply a clue to many things. The land beyond the 'Firm Middle Country' (dhrubā madhyamā diś) was still then the stronghold of non-

The great Marātha leader had the abiding faith in ancient Hindu institutions.

25 Agni Purāṇa 239, 31.

26 Arthaśāstra tr. p. 289; Nitisāra Chap. XX, p. 127. Śukraniti B. K. Sarkar's tr. p. 218-f.

27 Sat. Br. I. 4. 1.

28 Ait. Br. II. I. I.; Manu. Chap. 23.

29 Manu Chap. X. 44.

Aryan tribes or the tribes of mixed origin like the Aṅgas of East Bihar, the Magadhas of South Bihar and the Puṇḍras of North Bengal. In this region which is described as the 'land of the impure' arose an unorthodox faith,—Buddhism. This part of the country again turned out to be the cradle of Hindu imperialistic system. A monarchy arose in South Bihar (Magadha). It destroyed the tribal democracies like those of the Śākyas and the Lichchhavis and absorbed the bigger kingdoms like Kośala, Avanti and Vatsa. The curtailment of the privileges of the higher orders, and the prominence of the Kṣatriyas which the advent of Buddhism involved, and the consequent weakening of the position of the Brāhmaṇas, who served as natural leaders of the people against royal despotism, paved the way for autocratic rule. Being full of savage tribes, the eastern regions were specially favourable for concentration of power in single hands under ambitious princes who had the opportunity of recruiting good soldiers from among the savages and of maintaining a standing army. The tendency of eastern rulers to swallow up neighbouring states and build up an empire by force and diplomacy is evident from the tradition concerning Jarāsandha, King of Magadha, as recorded in the Mahābhārata.[30] As a prelude to the Aryan conquest of the eastern region, the old story of the conflict between the Aryans and the non-Aryans seemed to be in action. We hear of the heroism and military capacity of the chiefs of Bengal with glimpses of their aggressive attitude towards the people and princes of Upper India and also of their humiliations at the hands of rulers of that region. Bengal, divided into a number of small states, looms large in Epic literature. The Great Epic, for example, depicts the victorious campaigns undertaken by Karṇa. Kṛṣṇa and Bhīmsena in the region of the lower Ganges. The humiliation of

30 Sabhā Parva. Chap. XXXI.

the Puṇḍras, who had allied themselves with King Jarāsandha of Magadha, certainly breathes an atmosphere of courage and militarism.

4. Navy

By no stretch of imagination can the existence of a navy or occurrence of sea fights be proved so far as the original epic literature is concerned. References to sea-voyages do occur in both the Epics. Sugrīva sent monkeys to Yavana (Javadvip—Java?), Suvarna (Sumatra?) and Rajata islands in search of Sītā.[31] The Niṣādrāja Guhaka asked thousands of Kaivarta youths to keep themselves ready in five hundred boats to offer resistance to Bharata.[32] The Great Epic refers to Sahadeva's journey by sea, his war with the Mlechhas and occupation of some islands.[33] The same work has stated that navy formed one of the aṅgas (limbs) of the royal forces.[34] Prof. Dikshitar[35] finds many examples of ships being used for military purposes. But these are stray references and may be regarded as later interpolations. In the absence of more convincing proofs about naval fights, it is difficult to believe the existence of the Epie Man-of-War cruising in Indian waters. India was not then politically united nor did her political boundary extend from sea to sea.

5. *battle-army*

The Kurukṣetra war was long drawn-out and destructive. The people of the time, then in an advanced stage of civilisa-

31 Rām. Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa 45. 30.
32 *Ibid*, Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa 84. 78.
33 Mabht: Sabhā Parva Chap .XXXI.
34 Ibid. Sāntiparva 59. 41.
35 War in Ancient India, p. 287.

tion, must have acquired a thorough knowledge of military tactics and taken recourse to strategical plans in so terrible a conflict which, like the Peloponnesian war in ancient Greece, had drawn the whole of India within its orbit. The Mahābhārata has given bewildering details about the battle-arrays (Vyūhas) made use of by the Epic heroes. The Pāṇḍavas changed their battle-arrays from day to day. We hear of such orders such as Sūcī (needle-shaped), Krauñca (in the shape of a heron), Śyena (hawk array), makara (crocodile-shaped), maṇḍala (circular), Vajra (thunderbolt), etc., etc.[36] These battle arrays represent all possible kinds of movements of armies in warfare. A fuller treatment and a more rational division of battle-arrays is found in Kauṭilya.[37] Prof. Dikshitar's[38] analysis in this connection deserves mention:— 'A close examination of the arrays used in the Mahābhārata battles affords proof of the existence of four kinds of movement common to them,—circular, crooked, separate and compact, roughly corresponding to the deep and dense column of Mediæval England.'[39]

36 Formation of Vyūhas described in Udyoga, Virāṭa and Bhiṣma Parvas.

37 Arthaśāstra. tr., Bk. X. Chap. VI.

38 Mabht. V. 83. 7., X, 100. Agni Pur. 242. 1—18. 182. Manu Chap. VII.

39 C/o Kauṭilya tr. p. 423. 'In case of any obstruction the army should march in crocodile array in the front, the cart-like array behind, and on the sides in diamond-like array (i.e. in four or five rows, each having its front, rear and sides) and in a compact array on all sides'. For similar accounts also compare Agni Purāṇa 242-48, and Manu Chap. VII. Sl. 187-88.

6. *Army on the march*

As to the nature and time of march of the army, the Epic and Purānic literature recommends two kinds, viz. slow and rapid. When the offensive equipment is inadequate or when negotiations for peace are in progress, the march should be slow; on all other occasions it should be rapid. Winter (December) for long marches and summer (March-April) for short marches are generally favoured.[40] War music to the accompaniment of the drum was a regular feature of the Hindu army on the march. A picture of the army on the march is obtained from the Udyogaparva (Chapter 151) of the Mahābhārata. The following is the description of the Pāṇḍava army on the march:

> "Composed of the four traditional arms (limbs), it moves on as an irregular body amidst the blaze of conch-shells, the beating of drums and frequent war cries. In the van of the army march Bhīmsena and several other knights all in suits of armour. In the second line are the Prabhadrakas and the Pāñchālas. The king is in the centre, surrounded by carts and wagons filled with stores and provisions, tents, treasure-chests, arms and machines. Behind the king proceeds the main army, headed by the Knights. The movement of the army causes such a tremendous din that it seemed like "the roars of the deep when the tide is highest on the day of the new moon."

7. *Ambulance*

Ambulance corps with physicians and surgeons and nurses also accompanied the Pāṇḍava army.[41] Thus in point

40 Mabht. V. 83. 7. X 100. Agni, Pur. p. 242. 1—18. 182. Manu, Chap. VII.

41 Udyogaparva, Chap. 151. C/o Nītiprakāśikā, VI. 43. 50.

of order, arrangement, equipment and other details, the Epic army on the march looks very much like the army of any age, ancient and modern, minus the firearms, armoured cars, machineguns and aeroplanes.

8. *Encampment and Fortification*

The internal evidence of our national epics shows that the people were not ignorant of the rules of encampment and of the various necessities of maintaining and provisioning forts and armours with some degree of perfection. These have received great attention in the later works on the Nīti-śāstra.[42] The compiler of the Agni Purāṇa points out the necessity of a good and well furnished armoury. An empty arsenal is, according to him, an indication of the weak system of defence. With regard to the pitching of a royal camp the first preference was given to the selection of a suitable site. The Śāntiparva[43] considers the region near a forest to be the best site for camping. Camping by the side of a river is frequently met with. The description of the Kuru Camp, however, gives a clear picture of its position and appurtenances. It runs as follows:

> "Spreading over an area of five yojanas, it also contained countless tents and pavilions stored with *provisions and arms*. As in the opposing camp, so also here troops were relayed for outpost and patrol duty. But besides fighting men both camps (*Kuru and Pāṇḍava*) included a large and motley host of *non-combatants such*

42 Śukraniti. B. K. Sarkar's tr. Chap. IV. Sec. VI, pp. 214—15. Kāmandakiya Nītisāra: Beng. tr. by G. Sarkar, Chap. XVII, n. 115 ff.

43 100. 16—17.

as bards, panegyrists, priests, vendors, traders, prostitutes and women of rank."[44]

The Śāntiparva [45] classifies forts as under:

'Dhavadurgaṁ, mahīdurgam,[46] giridurgam tathaivaca,
Manuṣyadurgaṁ, mṛdurgam, Vanadurgaṁ ca tāṇi ṣat.'

This evidently shows their extensive use in military operations in those days. Forts and camps and armouries have not escaped the attention of the writers of the Epic, Purāṇic and Arthaśāstra literature. In Mediaeval Europe feudal castles served as veritable forts, regard being had to their position and place suited to the necessities of the times. (Joan Evans-Mediaeval France, p. 43)

9. *Natural and Artificial Fortification of Capital cities*

The writer of the Mahābhārata has given a graphic description of the defences of Magadhapur, the capital of Jarāsandha. It runs thus: 'Behold, O Partha, the great capital of Magodha standing in all its beauty.' Filled with flocks

44 Udyogaparva, 152. 1ff. Rāmāyaṇa, Laṅkā-Kāṇḍa 3, 20-22. Agni, p. 222. 4—5.

45 86. 5; c/o also Manu Chap. VII, 70—75. It speaks of the following varieties of forts: i) Fort with deserts on all sides. ii) Fort with brick-ramparts around, iii) Fort with water all around, iv) Fort surrounded by thorny plants, v) fort made of elephants, horses, infantry, etc., vi) Fort on a hill. The last one is considered the best. (Sl. 71).

46 As late as the time of the Moghuls in India 'forts on tops of hills were extremely numerous in the Dakshin' (Irvine-Army of the Indian Moghuls, p. 263).

and herds and its stock of water never exhausted; and adorned with fine mansions standing in excellent array; it is free from every kind of calamity. The five large hills of Vaihāra, Varāh, Vṛishava, Ṛsigiri and the delightful Chaityaka, all of high peaks overgrown with tall trees of cool shade connected with one another, seem to jointly protect the city of Girivraja.'[47]

In another section of the Great Epic we get a capital description about the defence of Dvārakā by Ahuka or Ugrasena. "Śalva (the Lord of Saubha, King of Mārtikāvat)... came to the city of Dvārāvatī. And, O Son of Pandu, the wicked king stationing his forces in array invested that city, around and above.[47a]...And stationing himself in the upper regions, the king began his fight with city...The city at that time was well furnished on all sides, according to the science (of fortification) with penons and arches, and combatants, and walls and turrets, and engines and miners, and streets barricaded with spiked wood-work, and towers and edifices on gateways well-filled with provisions.... And all the bridges over rivers were destroyed and boats forbidden to ply, and the trenches (around the city) were spiked with poles at the bottom. And the land around the city for two miles was rendered uneven, and holes and pits were dug thereon, combustibles were secreted below the surface."[48]

47 Sabhā Parva, Chap. 21, p. 63-64. For different names of this ancient metropolis Rājgir or Rājagṛha, see IHQ., June, 1950. pp. 152—53.

47a It is stated in connection with Sālva's invasion of Dvārakā that he came there in Saubhapura (flying fortress?) which carried the whole army (Bana Parva, Chaps. 16—20). "The wicked Śalva . . . afflicted by the Vrishnis mounted on his car of precious metal and leaving Dvārakā skudded through the skies."

48 Bana Parva, Chap. 15.

The Rāmāyaṇa[49] appends the following account of Ajodhyā:

"Her walls extend
Twelve measured leagues from end to end,

* * * *

High are her ramparts, strong and vast,
By ways at even distance passed,
With circling moat, both deep and wide,
And store of weapons fortified."

The Bālakāṇḍa (Chap. V) also describes Ajodhyā as a city of towers and gates bearing pennons, carrying weapons of offence and defence and garrisoned by soldiers of all arms Kāpāṭorṇavatī and Uccattaladvajavatī). According to Hopkins,[50] the epic descriptions of city defences are later interpolations and do not belong to the original epics (The Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa). But in the light of archæological evidence the existence of walled towns, ramparts and battlements can be proved long before the Age of Alexander. From theoretical discussions on citadel defence in the Great Epic it is clear that sufficient care was taken from very early times to make capital cities best defended places. Thus, the Śāntiparva[51] has it,—'The king with his ministers and the army thoroughly loyal to him should reside in that city which is defended by a citadel, which contains an abundant stock of rice and weapons, which is protected with imperishable walls and a trench, which teems with elephants and steads and cars, which is inhabited by men possessed of learning and versed in mechanical arts where provisions of every kind have been stored.'

49 Griffith's tr. Bk. I. Canto V.

50 JAOS Vol. XIII, p. 175.

51 Chap. 75, p. 277 ff.

10. *Espionage*

The system of collecting information by employing spies and diplomatic agents, (Dūta) envoys and ambassadors in times of peace and war,—civil and military espionage in modern phraseology, was known and widely practised. Civil espionage is as old as the Vedas.[52] We hear of spies (spaśa) employed by Vedic king to keep watch over the people. The earliest traces of military espionage are to be found in the Epics and the Purāṇas. The Rāmāyaṇa[53] mentions three kinds of envoys. Rāma sent Aṅgad as an envoy to Rāvana with the message. 'Give up Sītā or fight.' Rāma enquires of Bharata if he was fully informed of the eighteen tīrthas (state functionaries) of foreign countries through spies.[54] Qualifications of an ambassador have been catalogued by Bhīṣma in the Mahābhārata.[55] The employment, qualifications, marching and stationing of spies have been elaborately discussed in the same work. [56] Durjodhana's spies are found busy submitting reports on neighbouring countries to their king.[57] Spies were sent in search of the Pāṇḍavas while they were living in the country of Virāṭa. Duḥśāsana went to the length of making advance payments to these secret and trusted agents. When the war was on, the services of spies and diplomatic agents as informers of the enemy's plans, movements and resources were considered essential. Such instances are found in abundance in the Epic literature.

52 R. V. I. 24. 13. Ibid IV. 4. 3. A. V. VI. 4. 3.

53 Yuddha Kāṇda 1. 8—10.

54 Ajodhyā Kāṇḍa, 100. 36.

55 Sāntiparva 85. 26-28. Agni Purāṇa (241. 1—14) mentions three kinds of envoys. C/o Manu VII. 63.

56 Śāntiparva, Chap. 69.

57 Virāṭa Parva, 25. 5—6. 9—13. 26.

11. *War Music*

War music rousing the spirit of combatants, invoking God's gifts and wishing victories and striking terror played an important part. On the eve of the Kurukṣetra war the following musical instruments of both parties were played as is evident from the Bhagvadgītā:[58]

> "Arousing in him the joy, the Kuru elder, the grand-sire majestic, blew his conch, ringing a high blast of lion roar. Thereupon Madhu's lord and Pandu's son, standing in a great car yoked with white steads, blew each his glorious conch. The high-haired one blew 'Pañcajanya,' the Wealth-winner blew 'God's gift,' the doer of grim deeds, wolf-bowel blew the great conch Pauṇḍra."

The Great Epic mentions Mṛdaṅga, Bherī, Paṇava and Anaka as some of the musical instruments used in times of war.[59]

12. *Banners*

The use of flags and banners in all wars of ancient India is an old custom. The term "dhvaja" occurs in the Ṛgveda.[60] "Indra (is) ours when the *banners* meet (in conflict; let the arrows that are ours conquer, let our heroes be superior; us, O, Gods, aid ye at the invocations."[61] As we

58 Hindu Scriptures (Everyman) edited by Nicol, Macnicol, p. 226.

59 Karṇa Parva. Chap. 89. Different classes of musical instruments are also found in Mabht. VII. 39. 31; VI. 51. 23. 99. 17. 19. 43. 78. JAOS Vol. XIII. p. 318 ff.

60 VII. 85. 2. X. 103. 11. Vedic Index I. p. 405.

61 A. V. XIX. 13. 11. (Whitney's tr.).

enter the period represented by the Epics our information becomes more definite and the Mahābhārata[62] devotes a chapter to the enumeration and description of the flags used by the contending parties in the Bhārata war. The Great Epic calls the Army 'Dhvajinī' (VII. L. 3332), and in the Rāmāyaṇa (II. 67.26) banners or flags were attached to a pole on the chariot.

13. *Offensive and Defensive Weapons*

The number of offensive and defensive weapons used by the Epic heroes and their lieutenants is simply overwhelming. From the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa[63] we learn that the march of Śumbha began with 86 different weapons and 84 different clubs. The same work[64] mentions arms, clubs, śaktis, swords, daggers and clubs of many thorns. Dr. Chakravarty[65] has given a critical account of ancient India's arms and armours, tracing their origin, whenever possible, to the Vedic times. Some of them were:

I. *Offensive*:

(a) Dhanu = Bow.
(b) Iṣu = Arrow.
(c) Praharaṇa = Weapon.
(d) Sakti—made of iron also called Kunta = Spear.
(e) Tomāra—Pāśa? = Javelin
(f) Gadā = Mace.

62 Droṇaparva, Chap. 105.

63 Chap. 85. 87.

64 Chap. 133. 43—46.

65 AWAI Chap. XIV. p. 150—180, also see War in Ancient India by Dikshitar—Weapons of war as gathered from Literature, Chap. III, pp. 93—152. JAOS Vol. XIII, pp. 269-308.

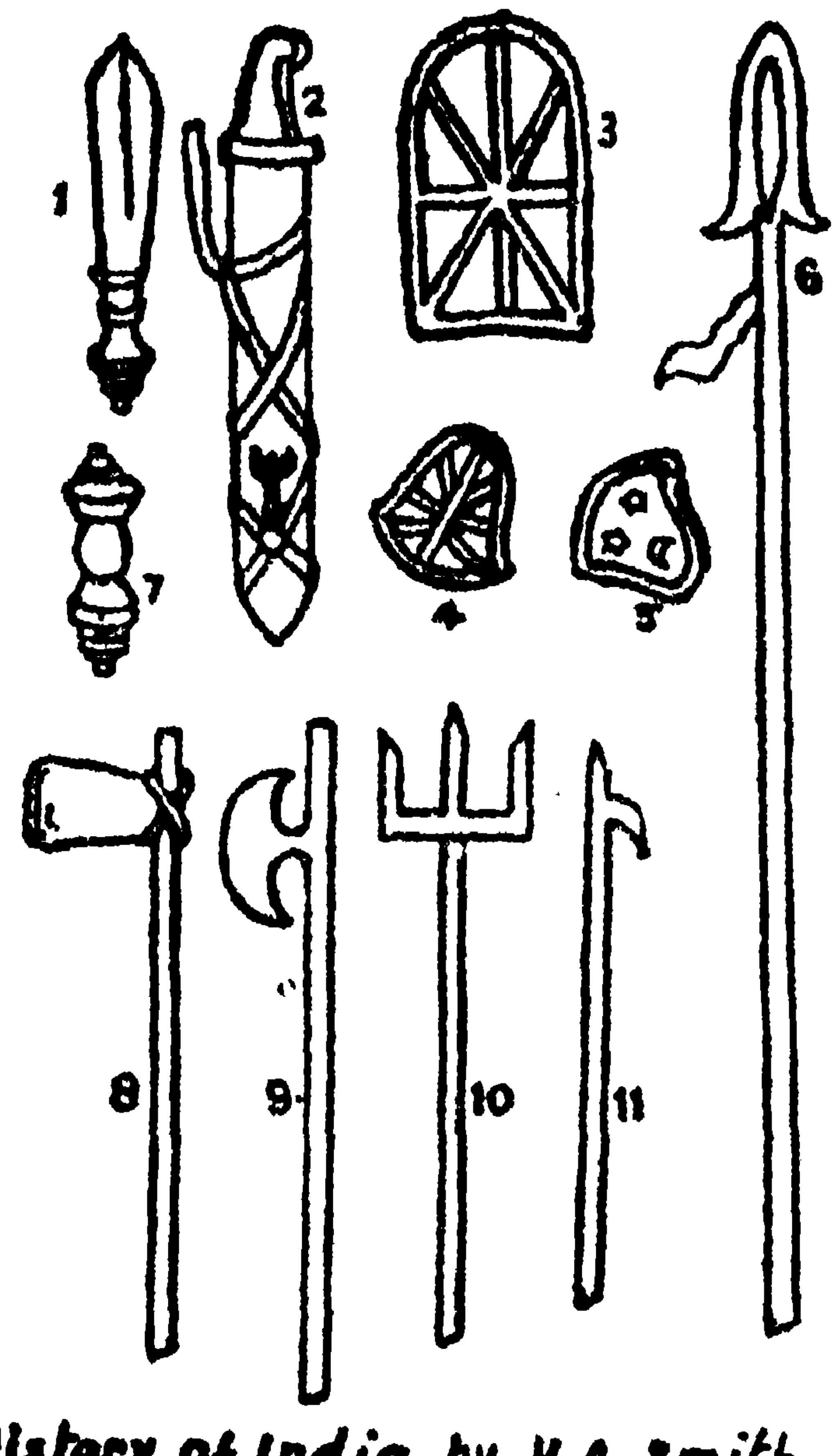
(g) Yantra = a general term denoting an engine of offence and defence.

(h) Kuṭhāra = Battle-axe—wielded by the nobility.

(i) Cakra = Discus; Yantra—'a revolving weapon, made of iron or steel'.

(j) Śataghnī = ("a hundred-killer"; "a rocket usually placed at the walls and gates of forts or fortified towns").

ANCIENT INDIAN ARMS[1].



from Oxford History of India by V.A. Smith, C.I.E.

(1) DAGGER; (2) SWORD, HUNG FROM SHOULDER; (3) INFANTRY SHIELD; (4), (5) CAVALRY SHIELDS; (6) PIKE OR JAVELIN; (7) VAJRA, CARRIED IN KING'S HAND; (8), (9) AXES; (10) TRIDENT; (11) ELEPHANT GOAD.

II. *Defensive*:

(a) Āvaraṇa, Carma = Shields.
(b) Varman Kabaca = Body armour.
(c) Śirastrāṇa = Helmet of metal.
(d) Kaṇṭhatrāna = Neckprotector.
(e) Hastapavā = Shooting glove.

14. *Military Formations*

Some difficulty presents itself when one tries to state precisely, on the strength of the epic materials, the units of the army and the rule of military formations as they existed in the age of the Epics. Statements relating to this important branch of military organisation are often conflicting and make generalisations an uphill task. Generally speaking, no uniform method of military formations can be inferred from the Epic literature. The Śāntiparva[66] reveals the formation of troops into units of 10, 20, 30 and so on. The Ādiparva[67] gives the following units of the army with their constituents:

Unit.[67a]	*Chariot.*	*Elephant.*	*Horse.*	*Foot.*
Patti	1	1	3	5
Senāmukha	3	3	9	15
Gulma	9	9	27	45
Gaṇa	27	27	81	135
Vāhinī	81	81	243	405
Pṛtanā	243	243	729	1215
Camū	729	729	2187	3645
Anīkinī	2187	2187	6561	10935
Akṣauhinī	21870	21870	65610	109350

66 100. 31. 67 2. 19 f.

67a Oppert Gustav in his book "On the weapons and Army

It appears from the above scheme that a combination of these nine divisions constituted a full-scale army under an Akṣauhinī,—the total number included in it being ten times that included in the preceding one i.e. an Anīkinī. A uniform triple increase in regard to horse and foot was laid down in the case of the constituents of each unit. But we meet with a different enumeration of army units in the Udyogaparva[68] which states that "a senā consists of five hundred war-cars, and the same number of war elephants, while ten of these constitute a pṛtanā and ten of these a Vāhinī." Thus a pṛtanā would bring the total to 10,000 and a Vāhinī to 100,000. Here we notice *an apparent contradiction about* the military formation in the Ādi, Udyoga and Śāntiparva schemes. Relying on verse 25 of the Udyogaparva, Chapter 154, in which it is stated that 'in common parlance the words 'Senā,' 'Vāhinī,' 'Pṛtanā,' 'Dhvajinī,' 'Camū,' 'Akṣauhinī and 'Varathinī' are used in the same sense, Dr. Chakrabarty[69] admirably sums up the position thus,—'The Ādiparva scheme of military formations is neither fully understood nor based on epic military practice.' The Great Epic would have us believe that the highest office in the army was that of the Senapati and each unit had its separate commandant such as Patti-pati, Senāmukhanetā, Gulmanāyaka, Vāhinīpati, Pṛtatāpati, Camūpati, Anīkinīpati, Akṣauhinīpati.[70]

organisation etc. of Hindus" has appended a slightly different account especially with regard to number of the army formation. It is based on Nītiprakāśikā (VII. 6—11, 29—30) of Vaiśāmpayana.

68 Chap. 154. 24.

69 AWAI, p. 84.

70 We learn from the Udyogaparva, section XVIII that eighteen akṣauhinīs took the field during the Kurukṣetra war,—11 on be-

15. *Epic Military Code*

The Vedic literature contains no reference to any accepted code of fighting. But the Epic and Purānic literature holds before us an excellent military code, making a near approach to the laws of war as laid down in modern International Law. It puts emphasis on the abstention from striking down an unarmed, unequalled and fallen foe, on showing quarter, giving punishment for indiscipline and betrayal, and reward for meritorious service, on humane *treatment of prisoners of war*,[71] on non-seizure of enemy property on certain condition and distinction between combatants and non-combatants, etc. Some of these rules deserve mention.

(a) A warrior in armour should not fight a Kṣatriya without a coat of mail.[72]

(b) A cavalryman should not attack a car-warrior. The principle behind it is that fight should be between equals.[73]

half of the Kauravas and 7 on behalf of the Pāṇḍavas. The following is a table of the armies assembled by the combatants:—

	Chariots	*Elephants*	*Horse*	*Foot*
Pāṇḍavas.	153,090	153,090	459,270	765 450
Kauravas.	240,570	240,570	721,710	1,202,850

71 It may be mentioned in this connection that according to Greek ideas the treatment meted out to prisoners of war was brutal, viz., they wholly passed into the hands of the conqueror and could be kept enslaved or even put to death. These rules were, however, subsequently humanised. See Greenidge—Handbook of Greek Constitutional History, pp. 47—48. For Cruelty of the Laws of War in Greece C/o Thucydides (Eng. tr. by R. Crawley) pp. 25, 146, 147, 155, 165, 216, 257, 273, 306, 410.

72 Śāntiparva 95. 7. 73 *Ibid*, 95, 10.

(c) Poisoned arrows and barbed arrows should not be used.[74] No helpless, benumbed or defeated person should be pierced with an arrow.

(d) Non-combatants who hide themselves in fear or who are mere spectators should not be killed.[75]

(e) A suppliant enemy after he has laid down his arms should not be killed. Prisoners of war should be treated well. Courteous treatment should be accorded to maidens made prisoners of war till they were sent back home after a year.[76]

(f) One who has one's hair unlocked, one who has turned one's face against one's opponent, who is in folded palm, without arrow, without armour and one whose weapon is broken and a Brāhmaṇa should not be killed.[77] The list of persons to be spared in battles is also found in Manu Saṃhitā. Chap. VII. Sl. 91-93.

(g) The sick and the wounded should be looked after.[78]

(h) In case of an insufficient supply of numbers in a particular division or divisions of the army substitute may be used.[79] The Purāṇic literature forbids clearly seizure or destruction of enemy's property except under grave necessity. Temples and temple treasures, properties of non-combatants and private individuals enjoyed immunity from seizure and destruction in war.[80]

74 *Ibid*, 95, 11—13.

75 Ram. Yuddhakāṇḍa. 80. 39. Manu Chap. VII. Sl. 92.

76 Śāntiparva. 96. 5.

77 Karṇa Parva. 90. 105—109.

78 Śāntiparva 95. 17—18 102. 34—39.

79 Agni Purāṇa 242. 38. 80 Agni Purāṇa. 226. 22—25.

(i) The Śāstras do not allow the liberty in warfare of striking below the belt. "Adho nābhām na hantaham iti śāstrasya nisçaḥ."[81] Manu Samhitā, too, forbids, the use of certain weapons in warfare.[82]

The Epic and Purāṇic account of the military organisation and art of warfare of the Hindus makes a distinct improvement on that given in the Vedic literature. We hear a good deal of theoretical discussion about political expedients and diplomacy,—a statecraft much like that of Kauṭilya in the shape of Kaṇika's advice to Dṛtarāṣṭra.[83] But it should be borne in mind that it is by additions and interpolations that the Mahābhārata has become what it is now. It is a great work dealing with almost everything about India and its glorious past, being 'the creation and expression not of a single individual mind, but of the mind of a nation,—it is the poem of itself written by a whole people.' As the original portions were composed long ago and *are posterior to the Vedic literature* and *anterior to the Age of Alexander*, some of the interesting military matters which the Great Epic reveals are genuine traditions nearly as old as the fifth century B.C. These were carried forward and perfected in the age of Magadhan imperialism, when, following the country's political unification, a policy of national defence had to be evolved and acted upon to protect the land from foreign invasion.

81 Mabht. Śalya Parva. 6. 6.
82 Manu. Chap. VII. Sl. 90.
83 Ādiparva, Chap. 140.

CHAPTER THREE

NATIONAL DEFENCE IN PRACTICE THE AGE OF MAGADHAN IMPERIALISM

THE MAURYA MILITARY SYSTEM AS DESCRIBED BY KAUTILYA, MEGASTHENES AND OTHER CLASSICAL WRITERS

(c. 600 – 185 B.C.)

1. *Rise of an Imperialist State*

With the establishment of the Śaiśunāga dynasty in the middle of the sixth century B.C.[1] ancient Indian History enters upon its period of Magadhan imperialism. It was also the period in which tribal monarchies and confederations formed for offence and defence in the early stage were replaced by territorial monarchies. It was thus a refreshing change throughout India from the national monarchies (Janarājyas of the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa) to non-national territorial ones.[2] We learn from the Buddhist Anguttara Nikāya[3] that in the seventh century B.C. there were sixteen great states scattered all over India. In the sixth century B.C. i.e. in the time of Bimbisāra there were four kingdoms,—Kośala, Vatsa, Avanti and Magadha, of considerable size, besides a number of republics or kingless states.[4] Out of these kingdoms and republics

1 The date of Coronation of Bimbisāra is C. 545—544. See PHAI 5th Ed, p. 187.

2 Kings became the masters of their people as well as their rāṣṭra (T. Saṅ II. 3. 3—4).

Jayaswal (Hindu Polity Pt. II. p. 196) takes them to be a variety of large monarchy (i.e. Mahārājya, Ādhipatya and Sārvabhauma) based on territory, and not on nationality.

3 III. 7. 70. tr., p. 192.

4 Rhys Davids—Buddhist India p. 1.

Magadha, a tiny state in Eastern India, came to the forefront, and gradually absorbing all other neighbouring states, became the seat of a big empire. The task, by no means an easy one, was accomplished by a series of Magadhan rulers beginning with Bimbisāra and ending with Aśoka. Under the Śiśunāgas and the Nandas the royal power increased by leaps and bounds. They easily overaweed their neighbours by wars and won over by alliances and added slices of territories to their dominions. These fresh conquests strengthened their hands and brought in their train power, prestige and wealth, enabling them to maintain standing armies.[4a] Through the combined efforts of Candragupta Maurya and Cāṇakya the Nanda sovereignty was put an end to. The first Maurya ruler had the ability and sagacity to bring under his control vast territories and in no time Northern India, including portions of the Deccan land, became politically one.[5] The inevitable consequence of the imperialistic scheme initiated by Bimbisāra, Ajātśatru, Śiśunāga, Mahāpadma Nanda was the growth of an 'up-to-ocean' empire,—'up to its natural frontiers,'—a complete realisation of the Sārvabhauma or the Ādhipatya ideal which was a favourite notion of the Brāhmaṇa period.[5a] As soon as a far-flung empire sprang into existence, the question of national defence or territorial defence as opposed to tribal defence, so long pushed into the background, turned out to be a thing of paramount importance

4a C/o Megasthenes Frag. XXXVI. It is interesting to note that as early as the time of the Lord Buddha the people following military crafts existed. The list mentioned in King Ajātśatru's question to his teacher includes elephant-riders, cavalry, charioteers, archers and nine different grades of army folk. Rhys Davids, Buddhist India (Indian Edition). pp. 56--57.

5 PHAI 5th Ed., p. 270.

5a Ait. Br. VIII. 15.

demanding the immediate attention of empire-builders and political thinkers. The Maurya empire (c. 321-185 B. C.) appears to be the result of three political forces,—the disappearance of political Saṁghas in India, the rise of the Achæmenian monarchy under Cyrus the Great in Persia and the invasion of the Punjab by Alexander the Great. Dr. R. C. Majumdar[6] rightly points out,—'The two factors—invasion from without and the growth of empire within, account for the decline and downfall of these political corporations... from the fifth century onwards they ceased to be the important factors in Indian politics.' The collapse of the Persian Empire on the battlefield of Arbela (331 B.C.),—Greece's fitting revenge for Thermopylae, served as an eye-opener to ancient Indians who probably keenly felt the necessity of having a centralised national government to defend the country from the irruption of foreigners and to protect life and property. In the 5th and 4th centuries India's political and administrative history underwent a tremendous change and in the process of that change emerged a stately fabric, viz. the Maurya State, proving the truth of Dr.B.M. Barua's[7] observation.—"However remote may be the beginning of the history of India, all the earlier processes of her political history converged towards the steady rise of Magadha into an imperial state...."

A change in political outlook was accompanied by a corresponding change in the military system or defensive arrangements of the country. The reputation of India's military capacity was seemingly on the increase. In the fifth century i.e. in pre-Maurya times, Indian troops ("Gandharians" and

6 Corporate Life in A. I. pp. 121—22. EHI., 4th Ed., p. 153.

7 Presidential address delivered in the Ancient India section of the Indian History Congress held under the auspices of the Annamalai University in December 1945.

"Indians",—Infantry and Cavalry?) accompanied the vast army led by Xerxes[8] against Greece and took part in the battles of Thermopylæ (480 B.C.) and Plataea (479 B.C.). Northern India was well known for her weapons of war, especially—swords and daggers; the quality of her steel was good. It is stated in the famous Persian Epic poem,—Firdusi's 'Shah-namah' that when Alexander invaded India swords and other weapons were immediately indented for by the Persians from India. 'The old (pre-Islamic) Arabic word for sword is '*muhannad*' which means from 'Hind' or India. This is a word in common use still.' We learn from Greaco-Roman writers that great standing armies had come into being in many of the Indian states, and that the use of many weapons, offensive and defensive, particularly the sword, was frequent. The Mahābhārata speaks of Navy as one of the limbs of the royal forces.[9] It is also believed that long before Alexander's invasion the inhabitants of the seacoast towns of Sind resorted to piracy in the high seas through the help of sea-going vessels. Their raids threatened even the Persian Empire. The river Tigris, as ancient writers state, was practically closed to navigation and its course was obstructed by the throwing of stones.[10] It is just possible that pirate ships were the forerunner of a regular navy, and that to the four-fold army was added another important—the Navy at least in the Age of Alexander. When the Achæmenian monarchy of Persia was on its downward path and Alexander of Macedon was about to undertake his historic march from Pella to the Beas, the Uttarāpatha or N.W. India was split up into a number of kingdoms and republics. On crossing the Hindukush Alexander, as classical authors say, subdued some of them, one or two states submitted to him, and from

8 Herodotus VII. 86.

9 Śāntiparva 59. 41.

10 Strabo: Geography XVI. 7; Arrian VII. 7.

some again, he met with stubborn resistance. This was rendered possible because most of these states possessed excellent military organisation. The fact that their land forces were not inadequate is evident from the writings of a number of classical writers.

2. *Army Strength of Indian States*

Land forces of the different Indian states in the time of the Macedonian invasion may, according to Alexander's historians, be thus arranged:

Page Ref.*	Name of the King State or People	Sanskrit name	Infantry	Cavalry	Elephants	Chariot
94	1 Massaga.	Asvaka.	38,000	...	...	...
102	2 Porus.	Puru, Pauravas.	30,000 50,000	4,000	200	...
278	3 The Malloi and the Oxydrakai.	Malava• Ksudrakas.	90,000 80,000	3,000	130	1,000
252	4 The Abastanoi.	Ambasthas.	60,000	6,000	...	3,000
285	5 The Agalassoi.	People living near the Sibis.	10,000	3,000	...	...
221-22 282 310	6 Agrammes, King of the Gangaridae and the Prasii.	Ugrasena.	200,000 200,000 200,000	20,000 20,000 80.000	3,000 4,000 6,000	2,000 3,000 8,000
16	7 The Assakanoi.	?	30,000	20,000	30	...
324	8 The Ambri and Sigambri.	?	80,000	60,000	...	...

Mc'crindle—India and its invasion by Alexander.

3. *Graeco-Indian Conflict*

Geography forced upon ancient India the use of mounted warriors fighting first from chariots and elephants, and afterwards from horses. She had always to take into consideration the nature of the ground. Prof. H. C. Ray[11], while discussing the influence of geography, points out the strategic importance of the N.W. India, the northern portion of the Indo-Gangetic plain and the peninsular India with special reference to India's wars and invasions from outside. He refers to the Eastern and Western extremity of the Vindhyan belt—the Baroda gap and seems to believe that the Aryans must have followed this gap in entering the south, that the Andhras were threatened by the Śaka satraps of the lower Indus valley along this gap, that the Cālukyas realised the importance of this region and that this accounts for Harṣa Śilāditya's failure against Pulakesī II. It is difficult to say when the cavalry was first used in India. Its use became general probably from the fourth century B. C., if we accept the testimony of Aelian[12] who says that "horses were held in high esteem by the people of that century simply because of their "great use in arms and warfare." In offering resistance to the Macedonian King Indian states brought into the field their cavalry, although all of them did not possess the Elephant corps.[13] After Ambhī, King of Taxila, had submitted, Alexander led his forces which were strengthened by the Taxilian contingents and a small number of elephants to meet Puru (Gk. Poros), King of the tract of land lying between the Jhelum and the Chenab. The result was

11 J. D. L. Vol. XIV. 1927.

12 Mc'crindle—Ancient India, p. 142.

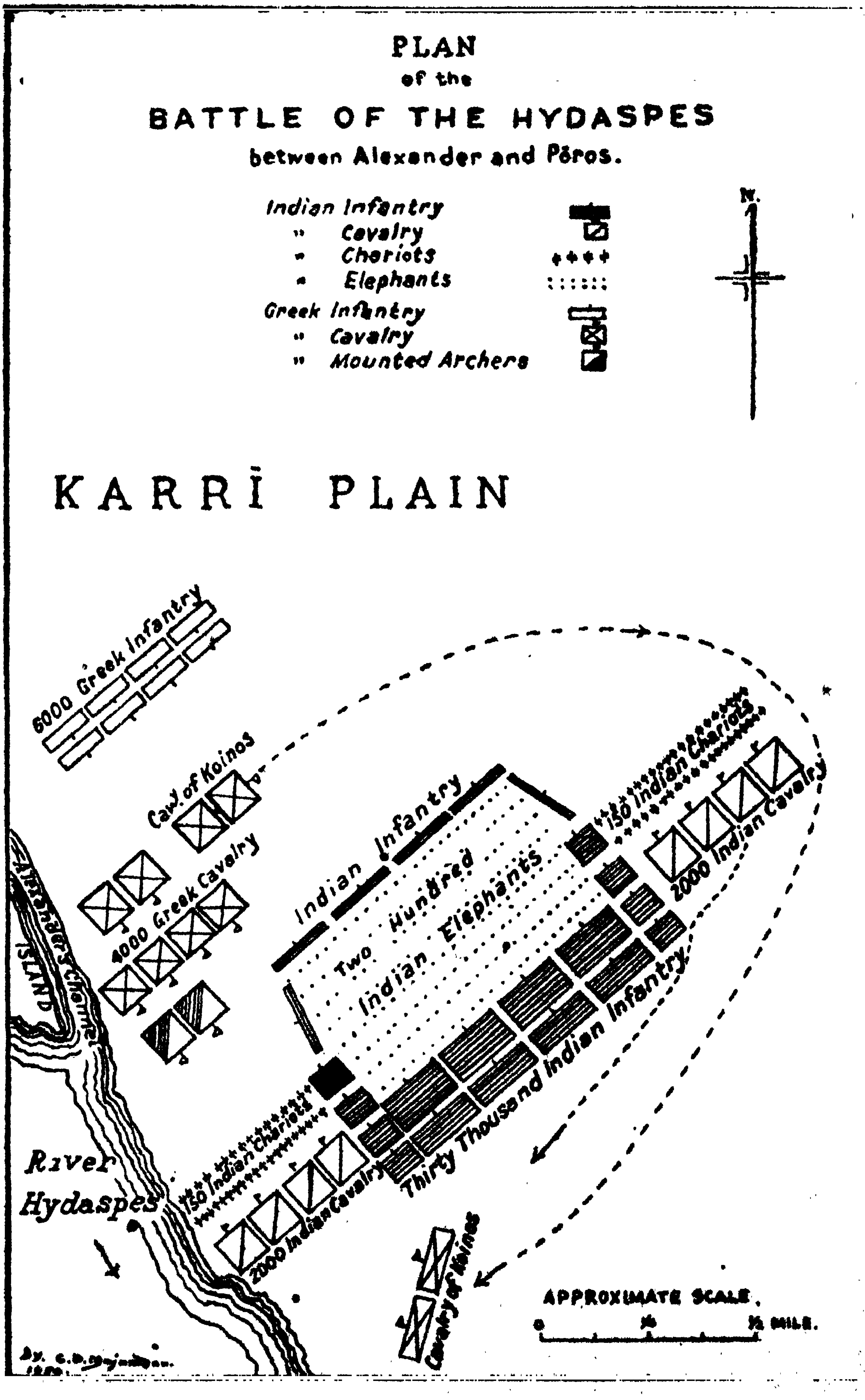
13 Indra, p. 45.

the famous battle of the Hydaspes (Vitastā = modern Jhelum) which took place, according to Dr. Smith[14], early in July 326 B. C. In the contest that followed Puru had to own defeat. His mounted troops were 'no' match for Alexander's mobile cavalry,' and his elephants proved a great source of weakness and confusion. Nevertheless, Puru's efforts to defend his homeland are exemplary, and have won the profuse praise of writers. Dr. Smith[15] describes after Diodorus and Q. Curtius the Indian army assembled by the Punjāb ruler to meet Alexander on the bank of the Hydaspes thus:

> "A stately force it was with which the Indian monarch moved forth to defend his country against the audacious invader from the West. Two hundred huge elephants, stationed at intervals of not less than a thousand feet from one another, and probably in eight ranks, formed the front in the centre. The reliance of Puru was on these monsters who would, it was calculated, terrify the foreign soldier and render the dreaded cavalry unmanageable. Behind the elephants stood a compact force of 30,000 infantry with projections on the wings, and files of the infantry were pushed forward in the intervals between the elephants, so that the Indian army presented very much the appearance of a city,—the elephants as they stood, resembling its towers and the men-at-arms placed between them, resembling the lines of wall intervening between tower and tower (Diodorus XVII. 87). Both flanks were protected by cavalry with chariots, in front. The cavalry numbered 4,000 and Chariots 300. Each chariot was

14 EHI 4th, Ed., p. 91.

15 *Ibid.*, pp. 69—70.


PLAN
of the
BATTLE OF THE HYDASPES
between Alexander and Pôros.
Indian Infantry
" Cavalry
" Chariots
" Elephants
Greek Infantry
" Cavalry
" Mounted Archers
N.
KARRĪ PLAIN
6000 Greek Infantry
Cavl. of Koinos
4000 Greek Cavalry
Indian Infantry
Two Hundred Indian Elephants
150 Indian Chariots
2000 Indian Cavalry
Thirty Thousand Indian Infantry
150 Indian Chariots
2000 Indian Cavalry
Alexander's Channel
ISLAND
River Hydaspes
Cavalry of Koinos
APPROXIMATE SCALE.
0
½ MILE.

drawn by four horses and carried six men of whom two were archers stationed one on each side of the vehicle, two were shield-bearers and two charioteers, who in the stress of battle were wont to drop the reins and ply the enemy with darts." (Q. Curtius VIII. 14)[15a]

This is a trusted account of the forces employed and the movement of the army planned by the Indian ruler against his European adversary. As to the equipment of the Indian infantry, each foot soldier carried with him a broad and a long buckler of undressed oxhide. He was also armed with either javelin or bow which is described as being 'made of equal length with the man who bears it; this they rest upon the ground, and pressing it with their left foot thus discharge the arrow having drawn the string backwards; for the shaft they use is little short of being three yards long, and there is nothing that can resist an Indian archer's shot,—neither shield nor breast-plate, nor any stronger defence, if such there be.'[16]

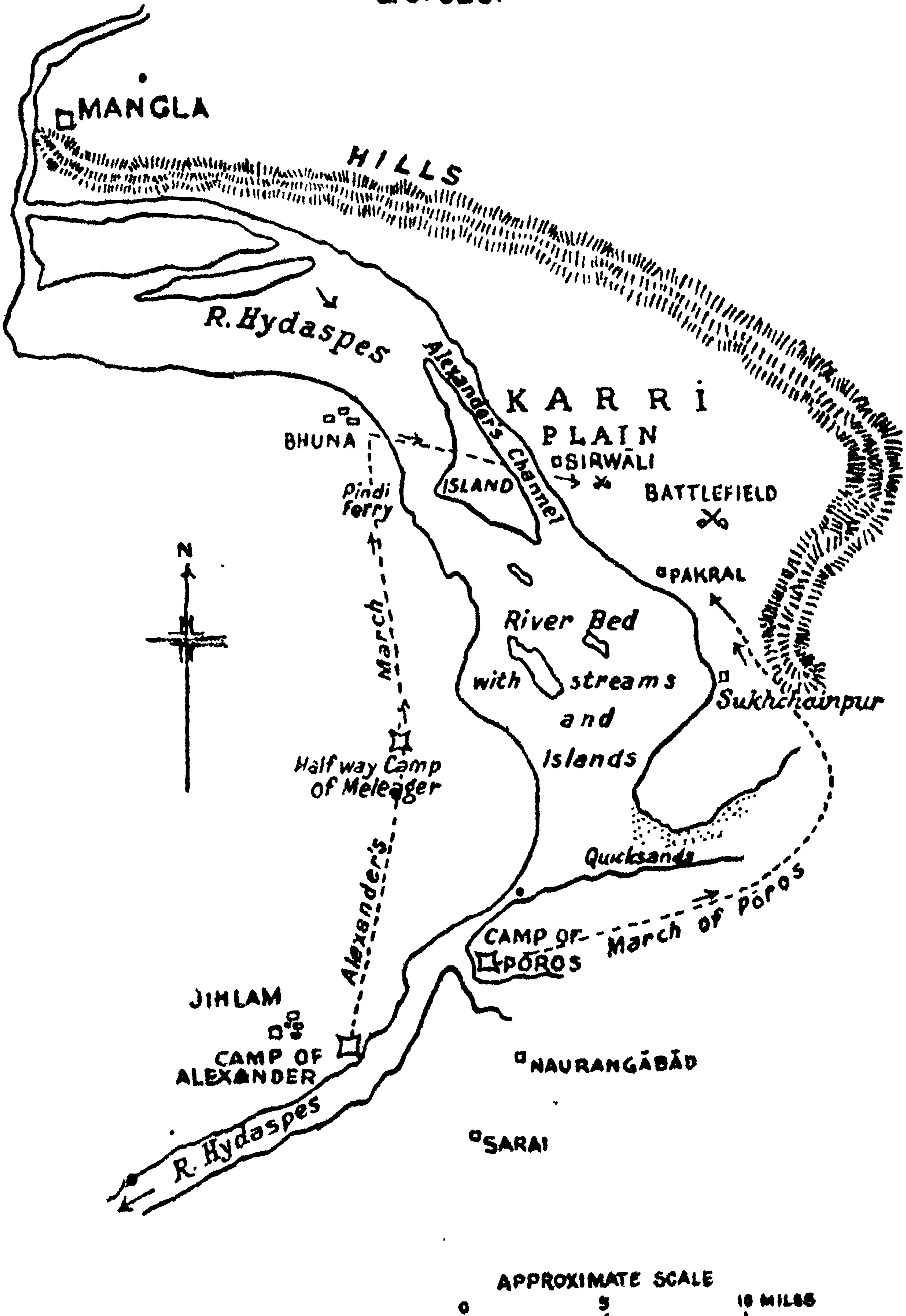
4. *Battle of the Hydaspes*

The battle of the Hydaspes (Vitastā = modern Jhelum) was fought and won by Alexander and further advance lay

15a C/o Megasthenes: Frag: XXXV. The chariot carries two men who sit beside the charioteer. The war-elephant, either in what is called the tower or on his bare back in sooth, carries three fighting men of whom two shoot from the side, while one shoots from behind. There is also a fourth man, who carries in his hand the goad wherewith he guides the animal mrch in the same way as the pilot and captain of a ship direct its course with the helm.'

16 Arrian—Indika, Chap. XVI.

THE BATTLEFIELD OF
THE HYDASPES
B.C. 326.



open to him. The following is Arrian's description of the fate of the battle:

> "The elephants being now cooked up within a narrow space, did no less damage to their friends than to their foes, trampling them under their feet as they wheeled and pushed about. These resulted in consequence a great slaughter of the cavalry, cooped up as it was within a narrow space around the elephants. Many of the elephantdrivers had been shot down, and of the elephants themselves some had been wounded, while others both from exhaustion and the loss of their mahouts, no longer kept to their own side of the conflict, but as if drive frantic by their sufferings, attacked friend and foe quite indiscriminately, pushed them, trampled them down and killed men in all manner of ways."

The defeat of Poros was not due to any lack of courage or resourcefulness. The elephants proved unreliable and dangerous. It may be stated incidentally that the elephants were first profitably used on Italian soil by Pyrrhus, king of Epirus and that he owed his victory at Heraclea (280 B.C.) to the elephants who inspired terror.[17] Nearly half a century before and to the great disadvantage of the Indian king, terror was turned into a terrible confusion. Dr. Smith argues that 'the Indian archers fighting from the chariots were not as competent as the bowmen of Alexander and the slippery state of the ground hindered the Indian infantry from making full use of their formidable bow.' He further states that the military value of Indian foot soldiers was often very small. Although they were used in large numbers, their defect was that the line

17 Mommsen—History of Rome, Vol. I, p. 394.

between soldiers and their followers was not strictly drawn.[18] As in the Epic and Purāṇic times, so also here the Indian infantry failed to rise to the occasion and contributed little to the winning of the battle. It did not do the attacking in an orderly fashion and in close formations. The heroic resistance put up by Puru, however, remains a glorious chapter in Indian history. In ancient India the fate of battles was sealed invariably as soon as the king leading his forces in person was put to flight. Such was the case even in the age of the Moghuls in India, and as Irvine writes, (The Army of the Indian Moghuls, p. 299). 'The death or disappearance of the general-in-chief always decided the battle. If Plutarch[19] is to be believed, Puru did not flee,—the battle which lasted for 8 hours was of a more mixed kind, though the Hydaspes was a Macedonian victory. "Military critics," says one writer,[20] "cannot point to a single strategic error in the whole series of operations conducted by Alexander himself or his generals acting under his orders from the time he encamped on the banks of the Hydaspes till the overthrow and surrender of Poros. At the sametime the courage and skill with which the Indian king contended against the greatest soldier of antiquity, if not of all times, are worthy of the highest admiration, and present a striking contrast to the incompetent generalship and pusillanimity of Darius."..."The Greeks", says Chesney, "were loud in praises of the Indians; never in all their eight years of constant warfare had they met with such skilled and gallant soldiers, who, however, surpassed in stature and

18 OHI pp. 64, 82. 19 Alexander, p. 212.

20 From Polyainos's work on the Stratagems of War (II. IV. 22) quoted by Mc'crindle in his 'India and its invasion by Alexander,' p. 345 ff.

bearing all other races of Asia."[20a] Dr. S. Chattapadhaya,[21] while examining Alexander's exploits and the extent of his conquests in India, has questioned the veracity of the statements made by classical authors. About Alexander's struggle with Poros he writes,—'Poros inflicted a heavy loss on the Macedonian garrison,...The war was evidently a drawn game, and Poros was able to maintain his own position...The classical authors have evidently twisted facts to glorify their own hero.' Poros fought at least a fair battle and owned an honorable defeat, in consonance with the Epic and Purāṇic traditions. The Indian princes adhered to the practice of fair fighting and the military code prescribed by the ancient texts.[21a] Dr. Thomas rightly points out, 'As regards the ethics of fighting, the Greeks received an impression of something not unchivalrous.' (CHI I, p. 490).

The latest study of Alexander the Great and his work in Asia is that by Sir W. Tarn (Alexander the Great in two parts, Cambridge, 1950). The learned professor has carefully made some corrections and re-arrangements of the confused Greek text of Arrian. One of his conclusions is that the Macedonian conqueror employed in the field of the

20a C/o Arrian's Anabasis VI. 2. ('In war the Indians were by far the bravest of the races inhabiting Asia at that time.')

21 IHQ, Decr. 1949.

21a In the Age of the Upanisads and Sūtras often finds great emphasis made on the high ethical standards of the rates of battle. Arrian (Mc'crindle: Ancient India, pp. 216) says that in times of civil war husbandmen were exempted from molestation by soldiers and were allowed to go on with their peaceful occupations even if they lived close to the scene.

Hydaspes 53,000 cavalry and about 15,000 infantry in place of the generally accepted figure 6,000. The movement of the two regiments of cavalry under Koinos did not proceed in the way it has been shown in the plan of the battle given in Dr. V. Smith's Early History of India, 4th Ed. p. 86. The figures used by classical authors are sometimes inflated. (Vide Tarn: Alexander the Great II, p. 190, pp. 193-196. See Map at page 67.)

The Beas (Hyphasis) was the culminating point of Alexander's advance in India.[22] The war-weariness among his soldiers is stated to be the main cause of his retreat from the banks of the Hyphasis,[23] but one is tempted to weigh carefully the statement of Plutarch.[24]

'The opposite shore, (The Ganges) too, was covered with numbers of squadrons, battalions and elephants. For the Kings of Candarites and Praesians were said to be waiting for them (Macedonians) there, with 80,000 horses, 200,000 foot, 8,000 chariots and 6,000 elephants trained to war. Nor is this number at all magnified, for Androcottus (Candragupta?) who reigned not long after, made Seleucus a present of 500 elephants at one time and with an army of 600,000 men traversed India and con-

22 Megasthenes, Frag. XXB. Solin. 52 6—7.

23 C/o Plutarch's Lives—'But the combat with Poros abated the spirit of the Macedonians and made them resolve to proceed no further in India.'

24 Lives, p. 213. While giving a general description of India, Diodorus XVIII, 6) says. 'It is inhabited by very many nations, among which the greatest of all is that of the Gangaridai, against whom Alexander did not undertake an expedition, being deterred by the multitude of their elephants'.

quered the whole.' So far as the military strength of 'the Prasii is concerned, a somewhat different account is found in Pliny.[25] 'The Prasii surpass in power and glory every other people, not only in this quarters, but one may say in all India, their capital being Palibothra, a very large and wealthy city...their king has in his pay a standing army of 600,000 foot soldiers, 30,000 cavalry and 9,000 elephants.'

By 325 B. C the Macedonian inroad was over. The success, however, of Alexander's campaign in N.W. India, when taken as a whole, undeniably shows the superiority of his strategy in breaking the lines of Indian defence. The direct result of his raid was superficial. We are concerned more with the ultimate effect of this great event. The most important indirect effect was that it helped the cause of Indian political unity and paved the way for the advent of Candragupta Maurya, the national hero-king of Pāṭaliputra. It goes to the credit of ancient India that her inhabitants, inspite of their reverses at the time of Alexander's invasion, did not lose faith in their own military system based on the 'four-limbed army', nor did they show any disposition to imitate the European method of warfare which they saw before their eyes. The revolution which overthrew the Greek rule in the Northwest was headed by one Candragupta who is said to have descended on his father's side from the royal family of the Nandas. According to one account, he was the son of the Nanda King Sārvarthasiddhi by Murā, daughter of a Śūdra woman. Buddhist tradition makes him a scion of the Moriya clan which belonged to the Kṣatriya caste and ruled over the small republic of Pipphalivana as early as the sixth century

25 Hist. Nat. Bk. VI. G. 22.

B.C.[26] According to tradition, he had served the Nanda King of Magadha in the capacity of a Senāpati, but somehow incurred the displeasure of his royal master and was expelled from Magadha. He took to his heels and on reaching the Punjab met, as Justin and Plutarch say, the Macedonian King. There he offended the Greek conqueror by the boldness of his speech and had to leave the Punjab. He then returned to the east, and with the help of Cāṇakya overthrew the Nanda dynasty and ascended the throne of Pāṭaliputra in about 321 B.C.[27] This was immediately followed by the expulsion of the Greeks and the liberation of the Punjab from the foreign yoke. A few years had scarcely passed when he was faced with a new danger. Seleucus Nikator, one of the greatest generals, had inherited the Asiatic dominions of Alexander and seemed ever watchful to revive the glories of his master by recovering the Punjab. But he was soon disillusioned.[28] He invaded India in about 305 B.C. But he does not appear to have advanced far into the country. The details of the struggle between Seleucos and Candragupta are not obtainable from classical authors; only the results are recorded. It seems probable that Candragupta won a second triumph over his Greek adversary who entered into a treaty of peace[29] by

26 Mahaparinibban Sutta. S. B. E. XI. pp. 134—35. Mahāvainśa—Geiger's tr. p. 27; PHAI 5th ed., pp. 180—181.

27 Viṣṇupurāṇa IV. 24; For discussion on the date of Candragupta's accession, vide AHI, pp. 99—100.

28 "He (Seleucos) crossed the Indus and waged war on Sandrocottas, King of the Indians who dwelt about it, until he made friends and entered into relations of marriage with him.' (Appianus Syr. C. 55).

29 Justinus XV. 4

ceding Aria (Herat), Arachosia (Kandahar), Gedrosia (Mukrān) and Parapanisadai (Kabul).—the Indian monarch giving five hundred elephants in return.[30] Soon after the conclusion of peace Seleucos sent Megasthenes as ambassador to the court of Candragupta at Pāṭaliputra. This marked the beginning of India's diplomatic relations with Hellenistic countries and recognition of her independent status and evolution of her foreign policy. The humiliation of Seleucos and the incorporation of his four satrapies into Candragupta's empire extended the limits of the Maurya empire to the foot of the Hindukush and invested it with great responsibilities, as Candragupta at once 'entered into that scientific frontier sighed for in vain by his English successors and never held in its entirety even by the Moghul emperors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries'.[31] It reflects great credit on Candagupta and his successors on the Imperial throne that they ably guarded the north-western frontier for over a century, and not a speck of dark cloud appeared on that horizon until their strong hands were withdrawn and the Maurya military organisation showed signs of deterioration for more than one reason. Aśoka's change of foreign policy and his otherworldliness 'must have created some apathy to militarism, political greatness and material well-being'.[32]

5. *Military Organisation of the Maurya Empire*

For detailed account of the Maurya military system and of the numerical strength of the army with which Candragupta drove out the foreigners, liberated the country and

30 Strābo XV, 724.

31 EHI 4th ed., p. 126.

32 PHAI, 236. Bhandarkar—Aśoka, p. 244.

established his undisputed sway over Northern India, we are indebted to Arthaśāstra and Greek writers, especially Megasthenes. Candragupta's army, thoroughly Indian in character, organisation and equipment, consisted of four parts,[32a]—the traditional caturaṅgabala—Infantry, cavalry, chariots and elephants. According to Megasthenes,[33] the standing army comprised 60,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, 9,000 elephants and a large number of chariots. On the strength of Kauṭilya's statement we may add the fleet and the transport corps. Magasthenes informs us that the Maurya emperor's huge army was efficiently administered by a well-organised war-office in charge of a commission of thirty, divided into six boards, each board served by five members in the following manner[34] :

Board No. I in co-operation with the Admiral—Admiralty.

Board No. II—Transport, Commissariat army service including the provision of drummers,[34a] grooms and mechanics and grass cutter.

Board No. III—Infantry.
Board No. IV—Cavalry.
Board No. V—War-Chariots.
Board No. VI—Elephants.

32a "Strabo makes a sextuple division by adding the commissariat and naval department". Mc'Crindle—Ancient India, p. 89 fn.

33 Indika, p. 156.

34 Mc'Crindle—Ancient India, p. 88.

34a This reference to the army service including the provision for drummers shows that military music played with the advancing army in the Maurya period. It was probably an older custom dating from the Vedic age. We have the reference to 'war drum (Vherighosa) in the inscription of Aśoka. (Rock Edict No. IV. Also Arth. Śās. tr. Bk. V. Chap. III).

"His (Candragupta's) organisation", writes Dr. Smith,[35] "must have been as efficient in practice as it was systematic on paper, as it enabled not only, in the words of Plutarch,[36] "to overrun and subdue all India, but also to expel the Macedonian garrison, and to repel the invasion of Seleukos."

6. *Maurya Navy*

That the Mauryas built and commanded a navy may, in the present stage of our knowledge, be accepted as almost certain, although their naval achievements are still to be determined. Their empire, at least in the time of Aśoka, reached the sea, both in the West and the East. There are literary and epigraphic evidences proving the inclusion of Bengal and Kāṭhiawāra within Aśoka's empire.[37] Moreover, it is not quite inconceivable that steps had been taken to prevent piratical raids on seaboard towns by the Government which had left no department of human life outside its scope.[38] Megasthenes as quoted by Arrian refers to the Board of Admiralty[39] and Kauṭilya[40], mentions Balādhyaksas. In answer to the question raised by Dr. Smith[41] that the

35 EHI 4th Ed., p. 133. 36 Lives, p. 213.

37 C/o Accounts given in Divyāvadāna, Hiuen Tsang, Dr. Smith's Aśoka (p. 223) and Junāgaḍh inscription of Rudradāmana. Ep. Ind. VIII. p. 42 ff.

38 For socialistic functions of the Kauṭilyan state see Arthaśāstra Bk. II. Chap. II & XII and Bk. IV. Chap. II.

39 Mc'Crindle—Ancient India, p. 218.

40 Kaut. Shyāma Sastri's tr., p. 69.

41 EHI 4th Ed., p. 148.

Boards described by Megasthenes as in charge of the business of the capital and the army *unknown to Kauṭilya*, Dr. H. C. Ray Chaudhuri[42] clearly states that "the magistrates in charge of the city and those in charge of military affairs are evidently the same as the Nagarādhyakass and Balādhyakṣas of the Arthaśāstra." Monahan's[43] suggestion that the Nāvadhyakṣa was a purely civil official, as there is no historical record of naval battle in the Maurya period, does not carry conviction when we recall Dr. Ray Chaudhuri's arguments which run as folllows:

'It is a mistake to think that the Nāvadhyakṣa of the early Hindu period was a purely civil official, for, he was responsible for the destruction of Himśrikās (pirate ships) and the Mahābhārata (XII. LIX. 41-44) clearly refers to the navy as one of the aṅgas of the Royal forces.'

"There (the chapter on Nāvadhyakṣa in Arthaśāstra) we find," writes Dr. N.N. Law[44], "the regulation that the pirate-ship should be destroyed and that the ships of an enemy's country illegally crossing its limits as also violating the harbour rules should be similarly treated. The taking of this step would not have been possible if Nāvādhyakṣa had not under him vessels equipped with armament to carry out the regulation." "Thus, there is some justification for saying that Candragupta's government maintained a navy.[44a] The duty of the naval

42 PHAI, p. 194.

43 Early History of Bengal, p. 163.

44 Studies in Ind. Hist. & Culture, p. 242.

44a Prof. Dikshitar (Mauryan polity, pp. 367—68) notes that 'among the seagoing vessels men-of-war also appear, bound for the

superintendent was very responsible. It may be further argued that the naval organisation of the first Maurya ruler remained unimpaired till the death of Aśoka. We know that Aśoka had political relations with the rulers of Tamrapanni (Ceylon), Egypt, Syria, Cyrene, Macedonia and Epirus.[45] Dr. Smith holds the view that the maintenance of political relations with so distant countries indicates the existence of sea-going vessels and naval troops.[46] One writer even suggests the existence of Indian navy in pre-Maurya times and opines that the ships by which Alexandér sent back part of his soldiers under Neārchus were built and collected in India.[47] It is further learnt from Arrian (Indika 27.1) that Nearchos, admiral of Alexander's navy, got a guide from Gedrosia who was acquainted with the coast as far as the gulf of Ormuz. On the basis of this account Dr. S. Chattapadhya opines 'that in the Achaemenian age *Indian vessels* were coasting along Gedrosia to Arabia and the Persian gulf and that the Indians of the Western borderland possibly took part in this maritime trade".[48] It is thus possible to hazard the conclusion that the 'merchant vessels were the forerunners of men-of-war and that the history of Indian

enemy's country (amitravisyātigāh), Kautilya (Bk. II. Chap. 28) mentions ocean routes, river routes and routes for coastal traffic (Kulapatha).

45 Rock Edict No. XIII.

46 Edicts of Aśoka. Intro. VIII.

47 Navy in ancient India--an article by Śāśibhūṣan Mukherjee in Māsik Basumatī, Kartic 1347 B.S. Also C/o Mc'Crindle—Invasion of India by Alexander, p. 156.

48 IHQ June, 1950.

navy may be traced as far back as the fourth century B.C., if not earlier.

7. *Roads*

The Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya tells us that construction of roads was one of the primary duties of the King.[49] The Maurya state, which was a highly organised one, must have paid sufficient attention to the construction and maintenance of public roads for civil and military purposes. The royal officers, as Megasthenes says, constructed roads and there were sign-boards at intervals of ten stades. The Maurya capital was connected with the N. W. Frontier by a road running from Taxila to Pāṭaliputra, probably the counterpart of a road built by Sher Shah in the sixteenth century and renovated by Dalhousie in the nineteenth. It is just possible that in the fourth century B.C. the Magadhan emperors covered the country with a net-work of roads. It will be of interest to note here that the first and greatest of Roman roads,—the Via Appia was built by the Censor Appius Claudius in 312 B.C. during the Samnite wars to maintain Roman military communications and to spread Roman civilisation. Provisions were also made for ferries and bridges over rivers. The existence of roads, ferries and bridges proved highly beneficial for movement of trade and army. Referring to the royal road Pliny[50] says that the stages and distances are as follows:

1. From Peukeloatis (Pushkarāvatī) to the Hyphasis (Beas) as measured by Baeto and Diognetus,—Alexander's survey officers.

49 Kaut. tr., p. 50. 50 1. VI. 21.

Peukeloatis	to	Taxila	—	60 miles.
,,	,,	Hydaspes	—	120 miles.
,,	,,	Hyphasis	—	390 miles.

2. From the Hyphasis to the mouth of the Ganges as measured by Seleukos Nikator (probably by Megasthenes and other Greek visitors).

From	the	Hyphasis	to	the	Hēsidrus	—	168 miles.
,,	,,	Hēsidrus	,,	,,	Jamna	—	160 miles.
,,	,,	Jamna	,,	,,	Ganges	—	112 miles.
,,	,,	Ganges	,,	,,	Rhodophe	—	119 miles.[50a]

8. *Cities and their Defences: Beginnings of Military Architecture*

Cities, whose number in ancient India was appreciable and which were generally situated on the bank of a river or at the foot or by the side of a hill or hills, were generally well fortified. In the fourth century B.C. cities were defended 'both by art and nature'. Some detailed description may be gathered from the Greek writers of the natural and artificial defence of towns and cities in the age of Alexander. We may refer to three important cities and their defensive works—the cities which had borne the onslaughts of Alexander during his famous campaign in N.W. India. The Greek invader attacked the formidable nation called the Assakanoi (Sanskrit Aśmoka?) with a view to capture their stronghold Massaga. The storming of the citadel was effected at a terrible cost. Indian resistance was probably tough, and in the words of Diodorus, 'the women taking the arm of the fallen, fought

50a H. G. Rawlinson: Intercourse between India and Western World App. I, p. 64.

side by side with the men,' Massaga was a formidable fortress lying probably to the north of the Malakand Pass.[51] On the north and west stood rocks, chasms and morassas. How well-defended it was can be realised from the following pen-picture of *Curtius*:[51a]

"An army of 38,000 infantry defended the city which was strongly fortified by nature and art, for, on the east, an impetuous mountain stream with steep banks on both sides barred approach to the city, while to the south and west, nature, as if designing to form a rampart, had filed up gigantic rocks at the base of which lay sloughs and yawning chasms hallowed in the course of ages to vast depths, while a ditch of mighty labour drawn from their extremity continued the line of defence. The city was besides surrounded with a wall of 35 stadia.in circumference which had a basis of stone work supporting a super-structure of unburnt sundried bricks. The brick work was bound into a solid fabric by means of stone so interposed that the more brittle material rested upon the harder, while moist clay had been used for mortar, lest, however, the structure should at all sink, strong beams had been laid upon these, supporting wooden floors which crossed the walls and afforded a passage along them."

The fall of Massaga where Alexander treacherously massacred fighting men reminds us of the prolonged siege and ultimate collapse in the sixteenth century of the impregnable fort of Asīrgarh in rugged Khandesh which com-

51 'A formidable fortress probably situated not very far to the north of the Malakand Pass, but not yet precisely identified.' AGI p. 667.

51a Mc'Crindle—Inv. of India by Alexander. pp. 194—195.

manded the road to the Deccan, a definite stage in the Deccan policy and the example of a piece of questionable strategy of Akbar, the Great Moghul.[52]

Having captured Ora or Nora, Alexander fell upon *Aornos* near the Indus. All classical writers agree in calling it a 'rock fort.' The city's strategic strength was enormous. Its defences have been thus described by Arrian:[53]

> "It was ascended by a single path cut by the hand of man, yet difficult. On the summit of the rock, there was, it is said, plenty of pure water which gushed out from a copious spring. There was timber besides, and as much good arable land as required for its cultivation the labour of a thousand men."

In connection with the subjugation of the *Aspasians* (Aspasians = Skr. Aśvaka) by Alexander, we hear of the fortified position of their city.[53a] It was, if Arrian is to be believed, accompanied by a double line of defence.[54] The same author speaks of the capital city of the *Malloi* (Sanskrit Mālava) as 'the strongest of all the cities that lay near'.

52 For different views on the subject—those of Abul Fazl, Faizī, the Jesuits and Dr. Smith, see Ishwariprosad: A Short History of Muslim Rule, pp. 393—95.

53 Mc'Crindle, Inv. of India by Alex., p. 71.

53a In the difficult hill country north of the Kabul river—AGI, p. 667.

54 This reminds one of the fortified position of the city of Babylon in the 5th century when the Ten Thousand Greek mercenary soldiers advanced towards the Persian capital. Thus, 'the city of Babylon was protected by a double defence against an enemy approaching from the north, by a line of wall and a line of water, both connecting the Euphrates with the Tigris.' Bury. Hist. of Greece, p. 521.

Plutarch (Life of Alex. Chap. LX.; Mc'Crindle, p. 307) describes them as the most warlike of the all Indians. Instances of fortified cities and towns with towers, gates, walls, parapets, earthen ramparts and ditches may de multiplied. Care was taken in the Maurya period to provide *Pāṭaliputra* with all the means of defence that men could devise and time could reasonably supply. The Maurya capital was built in the tongue of land between the Gaṅgā and the Śon, an excellent natural position,—'a position recommended by the writers of text-books and frequently adopted by the ancient Indians in practice.'[54a] Megasthenes'[55] description of Pāṭaliputra as quoted by Arrian in his Indika is superb. "The city was 9.1/5 miles in length and 1.1/2 miles in breadth. It was defended by a massive timber palisade not by a brickwall, pierced by sixty-four gates and crossed by five hundred and seventy towers. The palisade had loopholes for archers to shoot through and outside there was a ditch, 30 cubits deep and 400 cubits broad. The ditch was filled with the waters of the Śon."

The military architecture had already begun to develop in India, and Dr. P. C. Chakravarty's[56] remark on the nature and development of this essential art deserves mention :

'It is important to note that the age witnessed a significant development in the history of military architecture in India. Most of the towns were defended by means of of surrounding walls, but in some cases as a measure of additional protection strongly fortified citadels were added

54a C/o Kauṭilya's instructions on the choice of sites Arth. Eng. tr., p. 49.

55 Frag. 25. Strabo XV. C. 702 also C/o Kaut. Bk. II. Chap. III and Śāntiparva Chap. 86.

56 AWAI, p. 134.

within the walls. It will appear from a careful perusal of the texts that the citadel was built in one corner of the town, usually in the part which was most secure and well defended and that a continuation of the town wall formed its outer side. The citadel served as the ultimate refuge of the besieged when the outer defences of the town were captured or destroyed by the assailing force. It was the last resort to which the garrison retired in desperate extremity.' Thus it is clear that with the growth of military architecture in this age towns could not be occupied with perfect ease by an invader; they could at least offer resistance and *stand long sieges.*

9. *Military System in Kauṭilya*

No account of India's ancient history, be it political, social, economic or military, is complete without a brief reference to the Arthaśāstra, generally ascribed to Cāṇakya, prime-minister of Candragupta Maurya. Whoever may be its author and whatever may be the date of its composition[57] (these are matters of endless controversy), it is a comprehensive work on *state-craft, law* and *military system.* It contains some military matters and a good deal of theoretical discussion on methods of warfare, diplomacy and military organisation as a whole. "Though formally a śāstra," writes an Indian scholar[58] "it is *unquestionably based on the realities of civil and military administration...*

57 Messrs Ganapati Śāstri, Shyāma Śāstri, Thomas, Hopkins, V. A. Smith, Jayaswal and R. G. Basak assign the work to the 4th Century B. C.; while Messrs Winternitz, Jolly, D. R. Bhandarkar, H. C. Raychaudhuri & others hold that it was written in the early centuries of the Christian era.

58 AWAI Intro: p. 6.

we may assign the military ideas and institutions of Kauṭilya's work roughly to the period from 300 B.C. to 100 A.D."[58a] As the author drew materials from previous Arthaśāstras (the author himself refers to previous authors and different schools), the picture given in the book may be looked upon as the one representing the age of Magadhan imperialism, especially when we remember the fact that the account of the Maurya administrative system as outlined by Megasthenes, tallies substantially with that laid down by Kauṭilya.[59]

Capable as it was to make or mar a state, the army occupied a very important place in ancient Hindu political thought. On it depended the integrity of the state organisation.[60] The division of the army into four categories, —caturaṅgabala or caturaṅgacamū has been mentioned in the Epic and Purāṇic literature. It also finds mention in the Jātaka stories and Manu-Saṁhitā.[61] In Book II of the Arthaśāstra Kauṭilya mentions superintendents of Shipping (nau), Horses (Aśva), Elephants[61a] (Hasti) and Infantry (Patti), and details their duties. He regards the army (bala) as one of the seven elements

58a Kaut. tr. Bk. VI. Chap. I.

59 Dr. N. N. Law—Studies in Ancient Indian Hist. Culture pp. 247—49.

60 C/o Śukraniti, B. K. Sircar's tr. v. 12.

61 Ādiparva 69. 4. Virātparva 68. 13. The Jātaka. tr. by Cowell II. 66. 15. Manu. Chap. VII. 185.

61a Elaborate regulations for military training of elephants are laid down in Kauṭilya. It is of seven kinds, viz. drill (Upasthāna), turning (Samvartana), advancing (Samyāna), trampling down and killing (Vadhāvadha), fighting with other elephants (hastyyuddha), assailing forts and cities nagarāyanaṁ) and warfare.—Arth. tr. p. 167.

Prakṛtis) of the state and discusses the qualities of each.[62] The best army should, according to him, conform to the following qualities:

"Coming down directly from father and grandfather (of the king), ever strong, obedient, happy in keeping their sons and wives well contended, not adverse to making a long sojourn, ever and everywhere invincible, endowed with the power of endurance, trained in fighting various kinds of battles, skilful in handling various forms of weapons, ready to share in the weal or woe of the king, and consequently not falling foul with him, and purely composed of soldiers of *Kshatriya caste,...*"

He has divided the army into five classes in the following manner:[62a]

I. Maula or regular hereditary army or the army of the line (a).

II. Bṛita or mercenary troops (b).

III. Śreṇībala—troops of corporations or guilds which were bound to supply troops; these fought on short period service (c).

IV. Āṭavika troops or auxiliaries supplied by wild tribes (d).

V. Mitrabala (allied contingents) supplied by feudatories or allies (e).

62 Arth. Bk. VI. Chap. I. pp. 309—11.

62a Kaut. tr. Bk. VII. Chap. VII. p. 343.

(a) Maulas were probably the same as Hiuen Tsang's 'National guard of India'. According to Sukraniti the Maula army has been existing since the origin of the state (B. K. Sirkar's tr., p. 217).

The composition of the army as suggested by Kauṭilya was thus a *mixed one* with all its inherent merits and demerits. The Age of the Arthaśāstra was the age of an imperialist state and an imperialist state, bent on conquest and annexation, should possess the strongest standing army. From the close of the Fourth century B.C., the strongest Indian state i.e. Magadha must have commanded the biggest military forces, whatever might have been the nature of their composition.

As regards the scope of recruitment to the army, the

(b) The first historical reference to the employment of mercenary soldiers is to be found in the Cachnāma which states that Dāhir, Rāi of Sind, had in his employ 300 Arab troopers under the leadership of Muh Alafi-Elliot Vol. I, p. 156.

(c) There is difference of opinion among scholars regarding their real character. Dr. R. C. Majumdar (Cor. Life in A. I. pp. 30-31) calls them "a class of guilds which followed some industrial arts and carried on military profession at one and the sametime." "Śreṇis probably refer to ordinary trade-guilds and an organisation for calling out the people for service in time of invasion, a sort of militia or landwehr" CHI. Vol. I. p. 489. The military śreṇis were special troops who served for Army under a contract (Monahan EHB, pp. 76—7).

(d) "The mention of ātavikabalam" as part of military establishment in the Arthaśāstra shows that the army goes back to very early times. Those predatory hordes used to live in vast forests and inaccessible mountains." AWAI, p. 9.

(e) According to Śukra the army is of two kinds—one's own and that belonging to the allies. It meant forces attached to each independent state and was lent to fight enemies external or internal. In later periods of Hindu India employment of feudal militia became a common feature.

probability is that soldiers and generals were recruited from all the classes,—Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Sūdras and Vaiśyas (Kaut. tr., p, 417). Kauṭilya himself prefers a purely Kṣatriya army (Bk. VI. Chap. I.). There are literary and epigraphic evidences too, of the Brāhmaṇas serving and occupying position of responsibility in the army. Śukra's advice is that all the twice-born classes are to take up arms when Dharma is in danger. Alexander besieged "a city of Brāhmaṇas" and the defenders of the city fought with vigour for sometime (Mc' Crindle, Inv. of Alex., pp. 143-44). Puṣyamitra Śuṅga was the Brāhmaṇa Commander-in-Chief of the last Maurya King, Bṛthadratha. The Vākāṭaka King Pṛthivīsena described as "Mahābalādhikṛta" was a Brāhmaṇa.[63] Vaidyadeva, the minister of Kumārapāla and a great general, was likewise a Brāhmaṇa.[63a] Employment of foreigners was not altogether a rarity.[64] The Bṛta of the Arthaśāstra may be cited as an instance of mercenary troops recruited in or outside one's own country. Plutarch's observation is worthy of note. "The most warlike of the Indians

63 2. Sp. Ind. X 72.

63a EP. Ind. 348. II. 84. fn.

64 The composition of the Bengal army during the Pāla period—Vide Int. Ant. XIX. 58. The Kashmerian Kings used to recruit soldiers from Rājputanā and other parts of the country (Rājataraṅgiṇi VII. 1868. VIII. 2264. XV. 306). Like the Normans in Mediæval Europe the Rājputs lent the service of their sword in different localities and won great reputation. According to one writer (Monahan EHB, p. 19) 'from very early times wars in India have been usually carried on by professional mercenary soldiers... An Indian state has been able to maintain a relatively powerful army, recruited in part, from beyond its own frontiers.'

used to fight for pay. Upon this invasion (Alexander's) they defended the cities that hired them with great vigour ...". (Lives, p. 211). There are grounds for believing that the regular troops (Maula) were recruited either from certain localities (Kauṭilya tr., p. 173 speaks of Āyudhīya villages) or by voluntary enlistment from the fighting classes and tribes, notably Kṣatriyas. The question whether there was *conscription* or not is difficult to answer.

The author of the Arthaśāstra speaks of an officer called Āyudhagārādhyakṣa or superintendent of Armoury whose duty it was to collect all sorts of weapons, defensive and destructive engines of war and keep them in proper condition. "The superintendent", writes Kauṭilya, "shall employ experienced workmen of tried ability to manufacture in given time and for fixed wages, wheels, nails, armour and other accessory instruments for use in battles, in the *construction and defence of forts* or in *destroying cities and strongholds of enemies*.[65] He mentions two kinds of machines—*immovable* and *movable*. The immovables include Śarvatobhadra, Jāmadognya, etc. etc; the movables include Pañcalika, Devadaṇḍa, Muṣala, Tṛśula, Cakra, etc.[66]

10. *Units of the Army: Infantry*

A squad of ten under the leadership of an officer called *Padika* formed the smallest unit of the army. "For every ten members of the constituents of the army, there must be one commander, called Padika, ten Padikas under a senāpati; ten senāpatis under a Nāyaka (leader).[67] The

65 Kaut. tr. Bk. II. Chap. XVIII.

66 *Ibid*, pp. 120—121.

67 *Ibid*, p. 436.

above gradation seems to resemble closely Śivāji's infantry, which was carefully divided into regiments, brigades and divisions. The smallest unit consisted of 9 foot soldiers and the officer commanding it was known as the Nāik. The Haveldar of the infantry had five such units under him. Over two or three Haveldārs was placed a Jāmladar. The officer commanding 10 jumlas was called Hazari, and the Sarnabat, who had 10 Hazaris under him, was the supreme military and civil head of the state next to the king.[68]

11. *Diplomacy and Strategy*

In throwing fresh light on *diplomacy*, *military espionage*, secret war (Kūṭayuddha) and new conceptions of strategy, viz. well considered plans, conditions and time of marching (yāna) and methods of besieging an enemy fortress, the Arthaśāstra surpasses all writers. Thus, its author says, "The arrow shot by an archer may not kill a singleman, but skilful intrigue pursued by wise men can kill even those who are in the womb."[69] In the chapter on Kanṭaka-Śodhana Kauṭilya speaks of secret punishment thus: "The king....may inflict punishment on those courtiers or confederacy of chiefs who are dangerous to the safety of the kingdom and who cannot be put down in open daylight." (Bk. V. Chap.I., p.287). There was an elaborate arrangement for the employment of spies (*caras*) in the Kauṭilyan state.[70] In Book XII, Chapter IV of the Arthaśāstra we have detailed regulations for secret agents (gūḍha puruṣa). Spies in various disguises marched ahead

68 Sen. Military system of the Marāthas, p. 15.

69 Kaut. tr. Bk. X. Chap. 6.

70 *Ibid.*, Bk. I. Chapters XI & XII.

of the army gathering information and spreading division among the enemy troops wherever possible.[70a] Kauṭilya's espionage system was well known for its efficiency, severity and Machiavellian approach. We shall not be wrong if we repeat the words of one writer. 'In the work of *espionage* all methods were admissible, spying, lying, bribing, poisoning, women's wiles and the assassin's knife.[71] For diplomatic service the appointment of ambassadors was the rule. The duties of an envoy were thus prescribed: "The envoy shall make friendship with the enemy's officers such as those in charge of wild tracts, of boundaries, of cities and of country parts. He shall also contrast the military stations, sinews of war and strongholds of the enemy with those of his own master. He shall ascertain the size and area of forts and of the state, as well as strongholds of precious things and assailable and unassailable points.[72] Dr. Chakravarty's[73] comment on diplomatic espionage is very suggestive.—"An ambassador in ancient India, like his modern prototype," he says, "was nothing more than an honourable spy acting under the protection of customary laws." Such is also the description of

70a The use of signs and cypher writing and carrier pigeons (Bk. XII Chap. I) formed part of military espionage. The following regulation of Kauṭilya (S. Sastry's tr., p. 23) proves the comprehensiveness of his espionage system:—'Merchant spies inside forts, saints and ascetics in the suburbs of forts, the cultivator and the recluse in country parts, herdsmen in the boundaries of the country, in forest forest-dwellers, śramanas and chiefs of wild tribes, shall be stationed to ascertain the movements of enemies.'

71 AWAI p. 71.

72 Naut. tr., p. 32.

73 AWAI. p. 71.

an ambassador *according to the Agni Purāna* (241·11-13) *and the Yukti kalpataru, a late work on Nīti Śāstra.* (V. 71, p. 10.)

12. *Forts*

All Arthaśāstra and Nītiśāstra writers[73a] deal with forts. Kautilya's conception of fortification is wonderful. His "fortified capital" (Sthāniya) may be compared to the famous description of Pāṭaliputra by Megasthenes as quoted in Arrian. Durga (frontier fort) was specially guarded and was placed in charge of an officer called *Antapāla.* "The haven of the king and his army", he writes, "is a strong fort." He classifies forts as under:[74]

(a) Pārvata (hill fort).
(b) Audaka (water fort).
(c) Dhānavana (desert fort).
(d) Banadurga (forest fort).

Regarding the relative importance of the forts enumerated above, he says,—'Of forts such a fort on the plain, in the centre of a river and on a mountain, that which is mention-

73a For Śūkra's classification of fortresses see B. K. Sarkar's tr. p. 214. "One who has forts with troops can survey the whole earth, but to have every other kind of forts except those with troops is tantamount to imprisonment." *Ibid.*, p. 215. Other classifications appear in Mānasollāsa X. 90-91. Nītivākyāmṛta pp. 79—80. 'It is in the fort that the treasury and the army are solely kept, and it is from the fort that secret war (intrigue), control over one's partisans, the upkeep of the army, the reception of allies and the driving out of enemies and of wild tribes are successfully practised, Kaut. tr. p. 379.

74 Kaut. tr. Bk. II. Chap. III, pp. 54—55.

ed later is of more advantage than the one previously mentioned.[75] Rules for construction of forts and instructions for the erection of fortified capital (sthāniya) in times of danger (Kaut. tr, p.55) go to prove Kauṭilya's military genius. "The Indian forts", says Dr. Thomas, "were systematically designed with ditches, ramparts, battlements, coveredways, porticullises, and water gates, and in the assault the arts of mining, countermining, floodingmines were employed no less than the devices of diplomacy. In short, *the Indians possessed the art of War.*[76]

13. *Red Cross*

A most pleasing feature of Kauṭiliyan warfare was the existence of the Red Cross Service. Physicians and surgeons accompanied by assistants and female nurses formed part of the army. These medical men were provided with medicines and surgical instruments.[77] They were to stand behind encouraging the fighting men.

14. *Military Department*

The Arthaśāstra acquaints us with the different types of spies to be employed, the kinds of battles to be fought[78] the various categories of battle-arrays[79] to be arranged, the time of march to be in view,[80] and the carrying on of the inter-state relations to be done for the adoption of six-fold policy in endless details.[81] It has laid stress on the holding

75 Kaut. tr. p. 354.
76 CHI Vol. I. p. 490.
77 Kaut. tr. p. 427; Mabht. Udyoga, Chap 151—197.
78 *Ibid.*, pp. 433—37.
79 *Ibid.*, p. 433f.
80 " pp. 319, 323, 327 and 416.
81 " pp. 317—20.

of military exercises[82] and maintenance of discipline in the army.[82a] That the military organisation of the first Magadhan Empire was on a footing of efficiency and eminently fitted for resisting both internal and external aggression is evident from the well-balanced army regulations and from the system of paying adequate salaries[83] to and bestowing honours and rewards on, the army establishment. The following is a list of officers and their salaries per year as prepared from Book V, Chapter III, Shyāma Śāstri's tr. pp. 297-98:

Officer	*Salary per annum*
1. Commander-in-Chief (Senāpati)	48,000 paṇas[83a]
2. Nāyaka (Captain)	12,000 ,,
3. Officers in charge of Elephants Horses, Chariots and Infantry and heads of guilds (Śreṇīmukhya)	8,000 ,,
4. Superintendents (Adhyakṣas) of Infantry, Cavarly, Chariots and Elephants	4,000 ,,

82 *Ibid.*, Bk. II, Chap. XXX and XXXII, 134.

82a The Nītiprakāśikā prescribes punishment to soldiers for neglect of duties and treachery. Thus, "A king should in time of war put to death those men who oppose his orders, the soldiers who run away and do not keep their weapons, avaricious generals who fight treacherously, who fight against each other, who do not face the enemy, etc (The Nītiprakāśikā, VII. 60—63).

83 Bk. V. Chap. III. The pay of trained foot soldiers (Silpavantāḥ Pādātaḥ) was 500 paṇas per annum.

83a A silver paṇa is equivalent to about a shilling according to Dr. Smith (EHI, p. 149).

5. The Physician of the army, Chariot drivers (Rathika) horse and elephant trainers	2,000 paṇas
6. Superintendent of Armoury (Āyudhāgārādhayakṣa)	1,000 ,,
7. Trained soldiers or privates[83b]	500 ,,
8. Trumpet-blowers (Tūryakara)	500 ,,
9. The Elephant driver	500 to 1,000 paṇas according to efficiency.
10. Stationary spies (Saṁsthāḥ)	1,000 paṇas
11. Wandering spies (Sāṁcarāḥ)	500 ,,
12. Servants leading the spies	250 ,, or in proportion to the work done.

Was the Senāpati, heading the list of military officers, a member of the Council of Ministers (Mantri-Pariṣad) whenever it existed? His position in relation to the Council of Ministers (it existed at least in the Maurya and Śuṅga periods) has given rise to controversy among ancient Indian writers on political science. Some say that the Senāpati or the Commander-in-chief was a member of the said Council, while others believe that he was not a member of the "Cabinet", being simply a departmental head,—a Superintendent of the army working under a minister.[83c] Some-

83b C/o Śukfa—"Full pay is to be granted to those who are trained soldiers; half pay is to be given to those who are under military training. Chap. II, lines 86—87.

83c It may be recalled that according to the Saṁhitā of the Yayurveda and the Brāhmaṇa literature the commander-in-chief (Senānī) was included in the Vedic Age in the Council of *ratnins* (Jewels) or high functionaries.

times a distinction is drawn between Mantrinaḥ (Councillors or Ministers) and Amātyas or ministerial officers. Then again, Kauṭilya (Arth. Śāstra Bk. V. 8) points out that the mantrins were to be selected from among amātyas. Sir Percival Griffiths (The British Impact on India, p. 116) chooses to compare the Senāpati with one of the permanent under-Secretaries of State in the British Civil Service. Anyway, the Council of Ministers was a very important organ of the body politic in ancient India, and the name of ministers in charge of war and military department varied from period to period. (Vide Altekar, State & Govt. in A. I., p. 112)

The provision for the same pay to military officers[83d] as enjoyed by civil servants of the same status with a view to keep them above temptation is sure proof of the importance attached by the state to the Defence Department. Kauṭilya enjoins the king to fix under one-fourth of the total revenue the charges of maintaining his servants.[84] We have already seen that certain villages supplied contingents to the army (Āyudhīya). Some would find in them the germs of a military tenure which was so common among the Rājputs in the early medieval period. With regard to additional relief given to persons joining the fighting forces, and the rules governing transfer of officers the following lines may be quoted:

83d The Commander-in-Chief, for example, was paid the same emolument as the sacrificial priest (ṛtvig), the purohita, the heir-apparent and the minister.

84 Kaut. bk. V. Chap. III, p. 297: It is interesting to note in this connection that Śukra, while giving the items of state expenditure, recommends 50% of the revenue for the fighting forces (balam) and only 8½% for the civil administration (adhikārṇaḥ). Śukra. Chap I. L. 316—17.

"The sons and wives of those who die while on duty shall get subsistence and wages. Infants, aged persons or deceased persons related to the deceased servants, shall be shown favour...

There shall be no transference of officers employed to guard the royal buildings, forts and countryparts. The chief officers employed to superintend the above places shall be many, and shall permanently hold the same office."[85]

Apart from these essential details about military matters, we have the instructions for war music, words of encouragement on battlefields, rules for conduct of battles, and what is more important, the principles of occupation of conquered territories. Referring to those wise maxims given by Kauṭilya in Book VII, Chap. X, Dr. S. C. Sarkar[86] observes,—"It will be noticed from the citation of one chapter that he (Kauṭilya) was not the 'blood and iron', Machiavellian, cruel and unscrupulous dark politician that the average text-book writer makes him to be; he combines in him the democracy of a Stalin, the efficiency of a Hitler, the idealism of a Wilson, the imperialism of a Churchill and the patriotism of a Chiang." Cāṇakya's diplomacy and war have acquired an offensive meaning. The Maurya premier was, after all, a believer in the doctrine of a strong, centralised monarchy. He recommends war not as an end in itself, but a means to an end. Nothing should stand in the way of India's political union under one flag and one government. In order to enjoy the earth unopposed the king should be well educated, well disciplined and devoted to the government of his subjects (Artha S. p. 10)

85 Kaut. bk. V, Chap. III. pp. 299 and 298.

86 J. B. R. S. Part III, Sept. 1945, p. 148.

Whether the various rules, methods, principles and devices as described by Kauṭilya were made use of, and if so, how and when, we have no definite evidence to illustrate. Then again, there is probably some force in the arguments sometimes advanced that the Arthaśāstra, Dharmaśāstra and Dharmasūtra writers like Kauṭilya, Bṛhaspati and Baudhāyana deal more with theories than with the actual statecraft. But out of the maze of these politico-military matters, so systematically and clearly inserted in Kauṭilya's work, two things become transparent,—first, the empire under the Nanda and Maurya Kings was not only vast in extent, it was well governed and well defended. Under the Mauryas its boundaries kept on increasing, and for two full centuries there was no disquieting pressure from outside; the general prosperity of the empire told of the internal peace and security it enjoyed; and secondly, the writer of the Arthaśāstra to whom we are indebted for many valuable pieces of information must have been intimately associated with a prosperous and extensive empire and a knowledge of its inns and outs had probably given him opportunities to gather much personal experience and to compile his monumental work.[87] All was not, therefore, abstract thinking; the author had some concrete cases to work upon and generalise.

A word about the biggest military offensive of the Maurya period may be profitably added here. Following

87 Dr. R. G. Basāka (Kaut. Beng. tr. introduction, p. 27) seems to be in favour of the view that the author of the Arthaśāstra was Kauṭilya alias Viṣṇugupta and that he flourished in the 4th century B. C. M. H. Gopal in his Mauryan Public Finance (p. 14) suggests that the Arthaśāstra represents *actual and not ideal* conditions of state and administration.

the example of his warlike predecessors, Asoka, who was to eschew all aggresive warfare and abandon mundane glory from the thirteenth year of his reign, waged a terrible war. The earliest recorded political event of his reign was the conquest of Kaliṅga[87a] on the coast of the Bay of Bengal. There, as the inscription[88] states, "150,000 were carried away (as captives), 100,000 were slain and many times as many died." "These are" says Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar, "appalling figures for a tiny district like Kaliṅga and indicate the extreme horrors of a war even in that ancient period when the weapons of destruction were not so diabolical and deadly as now.[89] A warlike people with military forces at their command could ill-afford to bear the chains of slavery. They became again independent in the first century B. C. The Nemesis soon came and "Magadha learnt to her cost, what powerful Kaliṅga meant in the time of Khārvela", the Cheta or Chedi King of Orissa.

In conclusion, it is necessary to point out certain general characteristics of the military system of the Age of Alexander and of the Mauryas. They appear in brief to be the following:

(a) Large-scale employment of cavalry in Indian warfares as attested by classical writers.

(b) Importance of the elephant corps in certain theatres of wars to cause havoc in enemy's ranks as the common instrument or Mauryan strategy.

87a For the military strength of the Calingae see Pliny (I. A. 1887, p. 388). It is Kie-ling-Kia of Hiuen Tsang and has been identified by Cunningham (Ant. Geography of India p. 591) with Rājamahendrī on the Godavarī river.

88 Rock Edict No. XIII

89 Aśoka, p. 23

(c) Insignificance of the infantry in military operations when compared to its size and actual performance.

(d) Growth of military architecture all over Northern India and better defence of cities with their artificial fortifications and occasional resort to siege warfare.

(e) Personal valour of Indian kings as leaders of the army,—a matter of supreme importance.

(f) Plethora of military matters in Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra.

(g) No mention of conscription.

CHAPTER IV

MILITARY PURSUITS AND NATIONAL DEFENCE OF THE HINDUS

FROM THE FALL OF THE MAURYAS TO THE END OF THE SECOND MAGADHAN EMPIRE

(c. 185 B. C.—550 A. D.)

1. *Foreign Invasions and Military achievements*

A few words are needed by way of introduction to explain briefly at the outset the nature of defence that Hindu Kingdoms organised and of military endeavours made in the north and south after the collapse of the mighty empire of the Mauryas, before we consider the military system of the Second Magadhan empire, i.e. the Gupta Empire. As soon as the strong arm of Aśoka was withdrawn, the forces of disruption set in[1] and the Maurya empire rapidly declined. In Central and Eastern India the Mauryas were succeeded by the Śuṅgas (c. 185-112 B.C.) and the Kāṇvas (c. 112-78 B.C). In the Western and North-Western part the Maurya princes first asserted their independence and then fell a victim to foreign aggression.[2] A fairly big empire sprang into existence in the Deccan.

1 The adoption of the policy of Dharmavijaya in place of Digvijaya (C/o Rock Edict No. IV) must have impaired the military efficiency of the Maurya empire under Aśoka's successors allowing dependent states to throw off the yoke and foreigners to pour in.

2 Vide PHAI 5th Ed. Subhagasena and Maurya disruption, pp. 361-362.

It was the Śātavāhana Empire founded by one Simuka in the first century before Christ.[3] From the fall of the Maurya power to the rise of the Kuṣāṇas, Northwest India became the battle-ground for foreign powers. The Bactrians, the Parthians and the Śakas played their part as conquerors and rulers. These foreigners established their strong rule in Afghanistan, the Punjab and Western India generally. Northern India was a bundle of petty independent or semi-independent states. There was no central authority,—no organised defence. But individual kings were not militarily weak. If some of the Buddhist Jātakas are to be assigned to this period of confusion and weakness, it is possible to get some information about the composition of the army of Indian Kings. The Vessantara Jātaka[4] says that King Sañjaya had an army of 60,000 warriors. It consisted of horses, chariots, soldiers and elephants, the number of elephants being 14,000, a surprisingly huge number not to be met with in the writings of classical authors. The Mahaunmagga Jātaka[5] refers to an army of 60,000 soldiers. The same work tells us that the army was composed of thirty and nine thousand warriors.[6] The Buddhist writer Aśvaghoṣa, who flourished in the first century A.D. and was a contemporary of Kaniṣka, prescribes in his 'Sundarānanda Kāvya' an elaborate curriculum of study for the prince which includes among other things, the use of the lances, archery, and rules of battle-array and strategy.

3 The chronology adopted by Dr. H.C. Ray Chaudhuri (PHAI 5th Ed. p. 408) has been accepted here. While discussing the chronology of the Śātavāhana Kings Purushottam Lal Bhargava places Simuka between 46 and 23 B.C. vide IHQ. Dec. 1950.

4 Jāt. tr. Vol. VI, p. 298.

5 Jat. tr. Vol. VI, pp. 223-24. 6 Jat. tr. Vol. VI, p. 231.

2. *Spirit of Resistance in the North*

The foreign tribes which had settled in the north-west and west in post-Maurya times made many unsuccessful attempts to push their conquests far into the country. It was one long chapter of fierce warfare between the foreigners stationed in India and the Indian princes,—the Śuṅgas of Pāṭaliputra fighting with the Bactrian Greeks and the Sātavāhanas of the Deccan exchanging their blows with the Śaka satraps of Western India. It was really a period of invasion and of forcible intrusions from without and of general insurrection within,—a clear indication of India's setback from the political and military points of view. Nevertheless, in the history of ancient India, the four hundred years that elapsed between the decline of the Maurya power and the reappearance of Hindu imperialism under the Guptas were scarcely a period which might be counted as absolutely ineffective and inglorious. A revival of her military power was in sight. A question may be asked here—Was the Śuṅga-Kāṇva military system completely out of gear? The military records of the Śuṅgas, however, tell a different tale. From our point of view the most important political event of Puṣyamitra's reign was the Greek or Yavana invasion from the northwest referred to by Patañjali in his Mahābhāṣya and Kālidāsa in his Mālavikāgnimitram. The Yavanas, it is stated, came as far down as Madhyamikā (Nāgarī in Chitor) and Sāketa (Ajodhyā), and these two cities were virtually in a state of siege.[7] The Greek invasion led by the Bactrian King Demetrios,[8]

7 I. A. 1872, p. 300. (Sir R. G. Bhandarkar's article on the date of Patañjali).

8 For the identification of the Greek (Yavana) invader see Dr. Smith EHI, p. 211, Dr. H. C. Ray Chaudhuri PHAI, p. 267

son of Euthydemos, was successfully repulsed by Vasumitra, a Śuṅga prince. The battle was fought on the southern bank of the river Sindhu (in Central India). The hurling back of the Yavana attack was no mean achievement on the part of the Śuṅga prince. Unfortunately, we have no knowledge of the respective strength of the armies and of the tactics that decided the issue, but the defeat itself shows that the military renown of the Maurya times was not a past memory. The territories of the Śuṅgas[9] were less extensive, their defence problem was, therefore, not as difficult as that of the Mauryas. They probably took care to guard their frontier fortresses by placing them under able officers. One Vīrasena was placed, as Kālidāsa[10] says, in charge of a frontier fortress on the bank of the Narmadā. Demetrios' invasion was the last of the series of Greek invasions which had begun with Alexander. Antiochus III of Syria invaded India in about 206 B.C.[11] Polybius refers to a King called Sophagasenus (Subhagasena), probably a successor of Vīrasena, an independent ruler of Kāśmīra after Aśoka's death. The passage quoted below will explain the nature and result of Antiochus III's invasion of India's borderland and renewal of his friendship with an Indian King :

> "He (Antiochus the Great) crossed the Caucasus and descended into India, renewed friendship with Sophagasenas, the King of the Indians, received more elephants, until he had 150 altogether, and having

and the Journal of the Gaṅgānātha Jhā Research Institute Vol. IV, Pt. I, Nov. 1940.

9 Vide Dr. B. C. Sen's article in the Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 1949, p. 62.

10 Mālavikāgnimitram, Act. I.

11 Polybius XI. 34.

once more provisioned his troops, set out again personally with his arm, leaving to Androsthenes of Cyzicus, the duty of taking home the treasure which the King had agreed to hand over to him."

The going back of the Syrian King after the renewal of friendship with the Indian ruler suggests that the wishes of the Seleucids were not fulfilled. The Kingdom of Kāśmīra might have cried a halt to the march of the Syrian monarch. Although the Maurya Empire had already begun to break up, the Indian defences were not completely broken through until the days of Demetrios and Menander who exercised control over Indian territories for sometime.[12]

Trans-Vindhyan Defence

Turning now to the trans-Vindyan India we find the Śātavāhana Empire (c. 1st Cent. B.C. to 2nd Cent. A.D.) rise to the full height of a strong military power in the Deccan. The greatest King of the dynasty was Śātakarṇi I. He married Nāganikā, the daughter of the Marāthi Chief, conquered Eastern Mālwa and styled himself "Dakṣināpathapati."[13] The celebration of Aśvamedha sacrifice by him indicates his position as the paramount-sovereign of South India,[14] a position attained later on by Samudragupta and Candragupta II Vikramāditya in the North. Surrounded as the Śātavāhanas were by hostile peoples, they had to maintain considerable forces to retain their supremacy. They are believed to have introduced the system of military

12 For the extent of their Indian conquests as described by Apollodorus of Artemita and as determined by the diffusion of Menander's coins, see PHAI, 5th Ed, pp. 380 81.

13 Lüders' List. No. 1112.

14 *Ibid*, No 1112 (Nānāghat Cave Inscription).

governors (strategos), a system apparently borrowed from the Śakas. They also appointed district officers bearing the title of Senāpati.[15] They were "reputed to possess military force second only to that at the command of the king of the Praśii, Candragupta Maurya. The Andhra territory included thirty walled towns, besides numerous villages, and the army consisted of 100,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry and 1,000 elephants".[16] There were occasional conflicts between the Śātavāhana kings and the foreign tribes that had formed settlements in Western and Southwestern India, and it is no exaggeration to say that the period between the second century B.C. and the second century A.D. was really the time of chronic rivalry between the indigenous and foreign governments for supremacy over the Deccan and the Western region. The result was an alternate swing of success and failure. Twice in this period,—once towards the end of the first century B.C. and again in the beginning of the second century A.D., the Śātavāhana power seems to have been eclipsed by a dynasty called the Kṣaharāta or Kṣatrapa. After Śātakarṇī I they had to yield important possessions to the Scythians.[17] Nahapāna, who ruled over a considerable portion of Mahārāṣṭra, was the most notable ruler of the Kṣaharāta family. Epigraphic record would have us believe that in about 128 A.D. the dynasty was overthrown by Gautamīputra Śātakarṇī who has been des-

15 AHI, p. 131.

16 EHI, 4th Ed, pp. 217-18. Some writers are inclined to believe that the Sātavāhanas maintained a fleet of their own. The coins belonging to the reign of Pulamāyi and Yajñaśrī bear the figure of a two masted sailing ship (Rapson: Catalogue of Indian Coins, p. 22).

17 The cave inscription of Nahapāna's son-in-law Ushavadatta proves the inclusion of some territories in many places within Nahapāṇa's political influence (See Ep. Ind., Vol. VIII).

cribed as the "Śaka-Yavana-Palhava-nisūdana" and as the "restorer of the glory of Śātavāhana family."[18] The successors of Gautamīputra carried on warfare with those who came to wield power after Nahapāna in the Western Deccan. Rudradāmana I of the line of Caṣṭana of Ujjanī twice defeated, as the Junāgaḍh inscription[19] says, Śātakarṇī, the Lord of the Deccan, although there was no incorporation of his territories. According to Sir R. G. Bhandarkar[20] the lord of Dakṣiṇnāpatha worsted by Rudradāmana was Yajñaśrī Śātakarṇi. From the political events narrated above, we may draw the conclusion that it was due to the fighting capacity, heroism, love of country of the Śātavāhana rulers and their unflagging zeal to rid the land of foreigners that the Deccan was saved from being completely scythianised in the first stage of the Śātavāhana empire-building. The fall of the Śātavāhana Empire after three hundred years of existence may, in all probability, be attributed rather to internal aggression and the rise of a number of new dynasties in the Upper Deccan and the Far South than to any inherent weakness in its military system. Their political achievement, which are so varied and glorious may have been the outcome of their excellent military system.

3. *War-matters in Indian Coins and Sculptures*

We pass on now to the consideration of the military pursuits of the Indians in the period under review by a brief examination of their coins and sculptures. In the coins of the Greek, Scythian and Parthian invaders their

18 Ep. Ind., Vol. VIII, p. 60 ff.
19 Ep. Ind., Vol, VIII, p. 42 ff.
20 Early History of the Dekkan, p. 50.

kings wear coat of mail in chain armour. Helmets with straight swords and lances are found. Some of the kings again ride on horses or elephants. Spears, clubs, and other weapons of war also find place.[21] In Alexander's Porus Medal, for example, Porus rides on an elephant, hurls a javelin at his pursuer on horseback, who is either Taxiles or Alexander himself. The 'Medal' substantiates that elephant and horse were used in war, and javelin was commonly used in battles.

Indian sculptures of the second and first centuries B.C. are also helpful to some extent. In the Bhārhut (old Nagod state, Madhya Bhārata) Stūpa are found boats, chariots drawn by horses, carriages drawn by bullocks, many musical instruments, the old Indian sword and also the representation of a procession of foot soldiers.[22] In stūpa No I at Sāñchi, for example, are seen soldiers attacking the enemy down with armours and stone,—a representation of what is called "war of relics". In the south toraṇa (back) and the west toraṇa (back) at Sāñchi we find the "war of the relics" beautifully sculptured.[23] Referring to the former Sir John Marshall says,—"This was the war which the chief of seven other clans waged against the Mallas of Kuśinārā for the possession of the Buddha's relics. In the centre of the architrave, the siege of Kuśinārā is in progress, to right and left the victorious chiefs are departing in chariots and on elephants with the relics borne on the head of the latter". In a bas-relief of the same Stūpa we have a representation of city walls,[24] and as Prof. Rhys Davids points out, "it is very probable that in earlier times the

21 CHI. I., p. 389. pl. VII.
22 Sir Alexander Cunningham. The Stūpa of Bhārhut pl. XXXII.
23 Sir John Marshall—A gnide to Sāñchi pl. Nos. IV & V.
24 *Ibid*, pl. Nos. XXVI & XXVII.

fortifications were often similar in kind".[25] The equipment of the Indian infantry appears in the bas-reliefs both at Sāñchi and Bhārhut. Thus the time-honoured Caturaṅga bala has been given full representation in Indian coins and sculptures.

4. *Gupta Military System*

The political history of a country is inseparable from its military chronicle. For nearly three centuries preceding the foundation of the second Magadhan Empire (c. 320 A.D.) Northern India was practically dominated by the Kuṣānas,—a warlike central Asian tribe that had set up an extensive empire extending from Afghanistan to as far east as Mathurā, and possibly Bihar, Gangetic delta and Orissa.[26] The establishment of an empire by aliens in Northern India which was in a sense more stable and widespread than that of the Yonas (Greeks) was an indication of the silent revolution in the military system through which the country had been passing since the age of the Mauryas. The Scythian rulers of North-Western and Western India became thoroughly acquainted with the Indian system of administration and evolved an administrative frame-work, civil and military, on the lines of the Mauryas and of their own institutions. We hear of a number of military officers of the Śakas and Kuṣāṇas bearing the titles of Mahāsenāpati,[27] Daṇḍanāyaka,[28] and subordinate officers like

25 Buddhist India (Indian Ed.) p 47.
26 Eastern expansion of the Kuṣāna Empire by Adris Banerjee, IHQ. Decr 1951.
27 Lüders' Inscription Nos. 1124 & 1146.
28 *Ibid*, Nos. 1328.

Senāgopas Gaulmikas[29] (Captains), Ārakṣadhikṛtas[30] (guards), Aśvāvarakas[31] (troopers), Bhātamanuṣyas,[32] etc. Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri[33] finds close correspondence between the first two military officials of the Scythian period and the Senāpati and Nāyaka of Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra.[34] The Moṇikiyala inscription of Kaniṣka refers to Lala, the Daṇḍanāyaka of the family of Guṣaṇa.[35] Military officers bearing the Indian title of Mahāsenāpati existed along with Strategos (general or governor). As in the time of Kauṭilya and the Mahābhārata, the employment of spies, specially "Saṁchaṁtakas", in the Scythian period was probably a common feature.[36]

Candragupta I, the first independent ruler of the Gupta dynasty of Magadha, assumed the title of Mahārājādhirāja.[37] The kingdom he brought into existence was destined to grow in all directions. The conquests made by his successors like Samudragupta and Candragupta II Vikramāditya enlarged and consolidated it. The Empire, when at the height of its glory, roughly extended from the Eastern to the Western Sea[38] from the Himalayas in the North to the

29 *Ibid*, No. 1200.
30 *Ibid*, No. 1200.
31 *Ibid*, Nos. 381, 728.
32 *Ibid*, No. 1200.
33 PHAI, p. 520.
34 Arth. Bk. X. Chapters 1, 2 & 5.
35 N. G Majumdar's List of Kharosthi Inscriptions. No. 36.
36 PHAI, p. 526.
37 CII. Vol. III, p. 6 ff.
38 Candragupta II's territories include Surāṣṭra (Kathiawar) after the fall of the Śaka power. North Bengal (Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti) formed part of the Gupta Empire. A recently discovered epigraph proves the inclusion of Kaliṅga being ruled in 569 A.D. by Pṛithivivigraha, the Gupta viceroy. Dr. D. C. Sarkar, however, holds a contrary view. IHQ March, 1950.

Narmadā in the South. How this vast empire was defended is the next question that we must try to answer. The military system of the Guptas was substantially the same as that of the Mauryas; but there was possibly a certain looseness of the organisation. Samudragupta, being a typical Dharmavijayī, granted some amount of autonomy to conquered territories subject to payment of tribute and allegiance to the Gupta sovereign as their overlord. He thus created a band of feudatories. The trend of Hindu politics in the 3rd and 4th centuries was such that it favoured distinct feudal tendencies and provincial separatism.

The centralisation of the Mauryas was conspicuous by its absence and the empire built in the 4th century contained within itself a number of Sāmanta princes paying tribute to the Gupta overlord and supplying contingents to the imperial forces. With regard to the administration of Bengal Dr. Majumdar[39] observes,—"The Gupta emperors did not directly administer the whole territory which was formally included within the empire. There were feudal chiefs, referred to as Mahāsāmanta who assumed the title of 'Mahārāja.' The same process might have been extended to other units of the empire. Mātṛviṣṇu of the Eran Stone pillar inscription of Budhagupta (CII. 89) is looked upon as a Gupta feudatory. A seal matrix cut in the rock of Rohtasgarh (CII.284), refers to Śrī-mahāsāmanta Śaśāṅka. His identification with Śaśāṅka, King or Gauḍa is not altogether impossible.[40]

Samudragupta was the ablest member of the Gupta ruling house. He seriously attempted to bring the whole of India under his political control but, as already stated,

39 HB. Vol. I, p. 264.
40 *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 59.

the Hindu polity was then running a different course and Samudragupta, inspite of his wide conquests, was unable, it may be presumed, to bring all India under one uniform system and had to follow a middle course between a strict imperial control and full local autonomy. Such a system has always been a source of weakness and often a hindrance to the formulation of a durable policy of national defence. All the Gupta emperors from Candragupta I to Skandagupta were skilled warriors instinct with imperial ambition. The empire under their direct control was well defended. For two centuries there was nothing to disturb the peace till troubles came from the Pusyamitras and the Hūṇas during Skanda's rule (c. 455-467 A.D). Candragupta II (c. 380-413 A.D) augmented the empire by annexing Malwa, Gujrat and Kathiawar. A believer in Aryan institutions and Kṣatriya glory, he was determined to free the country from the hated Scythians and proclaimed a 'holywar' against the Śaka Satrap of Western India. Rudrasiṁha III was defeated and slain and Eastern and Western Malwa and Kathiawar were in Gupta hands.[41] If these conquests added valuable financial resources to the empire, they at the same time involved greater military responsibilities which Skandagupta had to be careful about. Troubles developed thick and fast with the incoming of the Hūṇas. The Gupta territories, when the conquests of Candragupta II were over, looked very much like a pan-Indian empire. If the identification of Candra of Meharauli inscription with Candragupta II is deemed acceptable, the Punjab had come within his sphere of influence. The imperial Guptas had, however,

41 Silver coins of the Garuḍa type and some coins bearing the date 90 (=409 A.D) (Allan p. XCiv) Udayagiri inscription of Sābha, CII, 35 Bāṇa's Harṣacarita refers to the fall of the Śaka power.

failed to exercise an effective control over the Punjab and and the Khybar pass. In this respect the Gupta military organisation was distinctly inferior to that of the Mauryas. Had they successfully guarded the North Western frontier, "the critical battle with the Hūṇas would have been fought beyond the Indus".[42]

From inscriptions[43] we know that Skanda had to contend with two formidable foes—the Puṣyamitras,—a local power in the Narbudda valley according to Dr. Majumdār, and the Hūṇas. The Gupta empire, already threatened with ruin by their depredations, was given a brief lease of life by Skanda as crown prince, who by subduing the Puṣyamitras and the Hūṇas, saved the empire. In his endeavour to beat back the invasion of the nomads, Skanda left no stone unturned and spent "a whole night on a couch that was the bare earth" to save his own realm and defeat the enemy. His anxiety as the ruler to guard the land of the Saurāṣṭras and his appointment of Parṇadatta[44] as governor may be taken as his well-thought-out precautionary measure, and the emperor was at particular pains to appoint a series of Wardens of Marches to protect his dominion from future invasion.'[45] The Hūṇas who had already gained a foothold in Gandhāra and the Punjab came again and again, and despite Skanda's successful defence, the empire was to collapse as the result of a second invasion after Skanda.[46] In the military annals of ancient India Skanda's heroic resistance against the Hūṇas

42 A new History of the Indian people vol. VI, p. 3

43 Bhitarī and Junāgaḍh inscriptions CII, pp. 55-56.

44 CII. Vol. II, p. 63

45 PHAI, p. 390

46 According to MMK (Sec. 25) this Hūṇa raid is to be dated fifty years later, and the Gupta empire broke up not under Skanda but in the reign of Budhagupta (496 A.D. coins) after 500 A.D. Jayaswal: Imperial History, p. 37.

reminds us of Puru's bold stand against Alexander. Regarding Skanda's war K.P. Jayaswal[47] appends an account from Chandragarbha paripriccha cited by Buston in his History of Buddhist Doctrines. It runs thus,—"King *Mahendrasena*,[48] who was born in the country of Kauśāmbī, had a son with arms of irresistible might. After he had passed the age of 12, Mahendra's Kingdom was invaded upon by three foreign powers in concert—*Yavanas*, *Palhikas* and *Sakunas* who first fought amongst themselves. They took possession of Gandhara and countries to the North of the Ganges. The young son of Mahendrasena of weighty hands and other congenital military marks distinguishing his person, asked for permission to lead his father's army. The enemy was numbered three hundred thousand men under the commands of the foreign kings, the chief of whom was the Yavana (or Yauna). The son of Mahendra put his army of two hundred thousand men divided into five hundred commanders, sons of ministers and other orthodox Hindus. With extraordinary quickness and a terrible drive he charged the enemy. In fury his veins on the forehead appeared like a visible mark (tilaka) and his body became steeled. The prince broke the enemy army and won the battle. On his return his father crowned him king, saying, "henceforth rule the kingdom," and himself retired to religious life. For twelve years after this the new king fought these foreign enemies and ultimately captured and executed the three kings. After that he rules peacefully as the emperor of Jambudwipa." "It seems" writes Jayaswal[49] "that *this account is based on fact.* The foreign army composed of three elements had penetrated up to the Ganges. It was the in-

47 Imperial History, p. 46
48 Identified with Kumāragupta I.
49 Imperial History, p. 37.

domitable will and skill of Skanda which won the battle. He led the flower of orthodox Hindu India, i. e. excluding Buddhists, younger sons of ministers and noblemen, and played, like his grandfather Candragupta II under Rāmagupta, a game of sheer courage, in making an impetuous charge against the enemy, numerically stronger. The battle was won, its fame spread in Hunnic Asia, in the Mleccha countries, as Cakrapālita[49a] puts it."

5. *Feudal Element in the Gupta Army*

Samudragupta's 'digvijaya' as described by Hariṣena[50] shows that the Gupta emperor possessed an invincible army. It enabled Samudragupta, Candragupta II and the later imperial Guptas to launch upon a career of conquest to win fresh laurels. As in the past, their army consisted of infantry, cavalry, chariots, elephants and ships.[51] If the existence of a number of sāmanta princes or feudal chiefs bearing the titles of mahārāja, mahāsenāpati, mahāsāmanta etc. mentioned in various Gupta epigraphs[52] is accepted, then it is reasonable to conclude that the Guptas in their wars and conquests and in their task of guarding the frontiers requisitioned the services of feudal militia. The days of standing armies were drawing to a close.

6. *Horse-Archery*

Both in the early and later Vedic period it was the usual practice with warriors to shoot arrows from their chariots, and even in the age of Magadhan greatness we

49a vide Bhitarī pillar inscription of Skanda. 50 CII. 6f.
51 Deo Baranark inscription of Jivitagupta II, CII. 217.
52 CII. 289

find men showering arrows riding on chariots and elephants. There is not a single reference before the Scythian period to horse-archers. The great epic throws out no hint about, and Alexander's historians make no mention of, horsemen provided with bows. But in their coins king Azes I, Azisiles, Azes II anb Satrap Zeionises appear as horsemen provided with bows.[53] From certain types of coins of the Gupta times it is possible to conclude that horse archery was in use in the Gupta period. Candragupta II, Kumāragupta I and Prakāśāditya are represented in coins as horse-archers.[54] It might have been introduced by the Parthians, but its history is short-lived. On this point one recent writer[55] on ancient Indian art of war observes,—"The art of mounted archery did not strike roots in the Indian soil. Introduced by the Parthians and continuing for a time as a sickly exotic, it withered away shortly after the Gupta period. This is the impression that one gathers from a study of the records of post-Gupta India." But it goes without saying that the continued existence of mounted archers would have added a stimulating chapter to India's military annals and given a new turn to India's struggle against foreign foes in the early mediaeval period.

7. *Military Officials*

Inscriptions seem point out clearly that in the Gupta period each office—civil and military had probably two grades,—the higher being distinguished by the addition

53 Smith, Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum, Cal. pp. 43-44 and Percy Gardiner. The coins of the Greek and Scythic kings of Bactria and India in the British Museum, Pl. XX 3. XIX 4.

54 Allan. Gupta Coins, Pl. VIII, 11-19; Pl. XXII.

55 P. C. Chakravarty. AWAI, p. 42

of prefix 'Mahā'. The following are some of the higher military officials mentioned in the inscriptions:

I.[55a] Mahādaṇḍanāyaka (the great general).[56]

II. Mahāsāṁdhi-vigrahika (the great minister of war and peace).[57]

III. Mahāsenāpati (the great general).[58]

IV. Mahābalādhikṛta (the great commander—Field Marshal).[59]

V. Mahāpīlupati (the head of the elephant force).[60]

VI. Mahābalādhyakṣa (the great general).[61]

VII. Mahāsāmanta (a feudatory title—the same as Mahāsenāpati).[62]

VIII. Bhaṭāśvapati (lord of the army and cavalry).[63]

IX. Balādhikaraṇa (chief of the military forces or it may simply mean war office).[64]

X. Raṇabhāṇḍāgārādhikaraṇa (office of the chief Treasurer of the war department).[65]

Apart from a host of military officials mentioned above, inscriptions contain names of various Gupta civil officials, such as the Amātya, the Rājasthānīya, the Mahāpratīhāra, the Mahākumārāmātya, the Uparika etc, but Dr. Ray Chaudhuri[66] seems to hold the view that "as in the case of most of the Pradhanas of Śivāji there was no clear-cut division between civil and military officials. The same per-

55a Mahādaṇḍanāyakas probably occupied a position inferior to that of Mahāsenāpatis (ASI 1911-12, p. 52).

56 CII. III, p. 6.

57 CII. III, p. 6.

58 CII III, p. 289.

59 Ep. Ind., p. 134, CII. No. 43

60 Ep. Ind., XXV 52 ff.

61 CII. III. 179.

62 CII. III. 286 ff

63 Basarh seals.

64 Basarh seals.

65 Basarh seals.

66 PHAI, 5th Ed., p. 560.

son could be Sāṁdhi-vigrahika, Kumārāmatya[66a] (cadet minister) and Mahādaṇḍanāyaka, great commandant of the army, and a mantrin could become a Mahābalādhikṛta, chief commander of forces." While the civil officials could hold military ranks and there was usually no separation between the two branches of the State service, (Pṛthivīsena was at first a minister of Kumāragupta I and subsequently became a Mahābalādhikṛta),[67] the Gupta military department appears to be a strong and separate organisation and the Sāṁdhivigrahika, as Majumdar and Altekar[68] say, served as the hyphen that joined the king and the military department. All three worked in close co-operation. A department of 'military finance' as distinguished from the civil side is suggested by the Basarh seals when they mention a Raṇabhāṇḍāgāra.[69]

8. *Maritime Activities and Military Enterprise*

From the second to the fifth centuries A.D. the Hindus, belonging particularly to South-East India, showed signs of maritime activities which culminated in the establishment of their political power beyond the seas. The fascinating account of Hindu colonial and cultural expansion beyond India proper,—the plantation of Hindu colonies in Sumatra, Java, Malay peninsula, Campā and Kāmbuja and the establishment of the Kingdom of Śrīvijaya under the Śailendra Kings should ever remain a glorious episode in ancient

66a Dr. Altekar (State and Govt. in A. I, p. 155) suggests that the Mahāmātya of the Maurya age and the Kumārāmātya of the Gupta times formed a class of officers similar to the modern I.A.S. or I.C.S. "The Term probably refers to one who has hereditary right to a high office of State" (HBI. Appendix A, p. 284).

67 Ep. Ind. X 71.

68 A New Hist. of the Indian people, Vol. VI, p. 279.

69 PHAI, 5th Ed, p. 563 fn.

Indian History.[70] The Hindu expansionist movement began in the 2nd century and was completed in the 7th century A. D. The spirit of adventure,—the spirit that led Indians in after-ages to go abroad, to found kingdoms, to maintain and spread their own civilisation, was in them ever since the Ṛgvedic times. This cultural expansionist movement was born primarily of military enterprise, love of adventure and commercial gain. Although a military adventurer[71] sometimes seized political power, the cultural domination over various races in different parts of the Indo-Chinese peninsula was not secured by military aggrandisement. The maintenance of kingdoms and political authority far away from homeland no doubt requires stout hearts and efficient military organisation to quell from time to time internal troubles and external aggression. Things, however, changed in the 10th century, and military zeal got the upper hand under the Coḷas of Tanjore. The naval organisation of this Tamil power reached its high watermark of efficiency under Rājendra Coḷa I (1014-44) surnamed Goṅgaikoṇḍa. He made extensive overseas expeditions and conquered a number of islands in the Eastern Archipelago or modern Indonesia.[72] "Goṅgaikoṇḍa", it has been rightly stated, "came into possession of one of the great strategic keys of the world. The Bay of Bengal was converted into a Coḷa lake and the old movement of colonisation was given a new impetus.[73] The strategic importance of S. E. Pacific with reference to India's

70 Dr. R. C. Majumdar—Hindu Colonies in the Far East, Chap. II.

71 *Ibid* p. 13.

72 S. I. I. Vol. II. Part I. For struggle between the Coḷas and the Śailendras of Śrīvijaya, vide Hindu Colonies in the Far East, pp. 34-35.

73 AWAI, p. 65.

defence, so dangerously threatened in modern times, especially during the World War II, was unthinkable. Japan was in the lap of feudalism: America was yet to be discovered: European powers were in mediaeval trammels, and the birth of the Far Eastern Question was distant still.

9. *Division of the Army*

About the division, composition and the equipment of soldiers, in the Gupta army, literary notices, epigraphs and coins furnish us with a few facts which enable us to say that the Gupta land forces were generally composed of three elements—infantry, cavalry and elephants. One or two inscriptions of the period omit chariot.[74] The use of camels as part of the army became frequent among the states of Rājaputanā in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. The Gupta fighting forces consisted really of hereditary troops (maula), local levies and feudal militia.[75] Recruits were drawn not from any particular class, i.e. exclusively from the Kṣatriyas. Puṣyamitra Śuṅga, Pṛthvīsena and others were Brāhmaṇas who were, as we know, elevated to the position of Commander-in-Chief (Mahābalādhikṛta). Some seals found in different places within the Gupta empire seem to indicate that the army had different quarter-masters in different localities.[76] Kālidāsa[77] mentions such weapons as bows, arrows, swords, battle-axes, spears, javelins, barbed darts, etc. The poet also says that soldiers were supplied with armours and helmets.

74 Günaighar Ins., IHQ. VI, p. 53 ff.
75 AHI pl 90.
76 ASI (R) 1903-04 p. 108.
77 *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 48-49.

10. *Navy*

We have already seen that the Mauryas had created a naval department. The naval tradition of the first Magadhan empire continued in the second. The Gupta Empire reached the sea both in the East and West[78] and there are reasons to believe that they fought a number of naval battles, too. The Allāhābād Pillar Inscription[79] states that Samudragupta's sway extended over the dwellers of islands, Siṁhala included. Such a position is imaginable only if the possession of a navy by the Gupta sovereign is thought of. There is a reference to the 'victorious camp' of Jīvita Gupta II in the *Deobaranark Inscription*. The camp was "invincible through (its) equipment of great *ships* and elephants, horses and foot soldiers".[80] The *Apṣad inscription* of Ādityasena which refers to a naval victory over Susthitavarman, King of Kāmarūpa runs thus:

The mighty fame of Mahāsenagupta marked with honour of victory in war over the illustrious Susthitavarman... is still constantly sung on the banks of river Lohitya.[81] In the *Gunaighar Copper Plate Inscription of Vainyagupta*[82] (Gupta year 188- 507 A.D.) there is a reference to *ship* but not to *chariot* as part of the army. The addition of the former and the omission of the latter shows that the navy was a factor in the army of Indian princes in the sixth

78 Dāmodarpur plates of the time of Kumāra Gupta I: Allāhābād Pillar Inscription: Udayagiri Cave Inscription, Ep. Ind, X, p. 71 f. *Ibid* XV, p. 130 f. Fleet CII III, p. 6 & p. 25. Bāṇa's Harṣacarita also refers to the fall of the Śaka power in Western India. Allan: Gupta Coins, p. XCIV.

79 CII. III. 6f.

80 *Ibid*, III p. 217.

81 Hoernle: JRAS, 1903. 561.

82 IHQ VI. p. 53 ff.

century and that the chariot, the earliest instrument of warfare was growing less useful. But about the naval organisation, little information is available.

11. *Gupta Military Strategy*

In one complete sense the *Gupta* period was the turning-point in the history of ancient Indian military strategy, especially in respect of the methods of positional and mobile warfare in particular and pitched battles in general. It is necessary at this stage to recall the military strategy adopted in previous periods and its consequences. The *Maurya* and pre-Maurya strategy centred round huge elephant forces which were especially useful in positional warfares in jungle areas; Bimbisāra's war-elephants were a standing menace to his western neighbours, but later on the elephant corps had to give in before the mobile Macedonian cavalry. Likewise, in the *Scythian* period, cavalry, equipped with lances and long bows shooting at long range and protected by heavy armour, was unquestionably a formidable factor in all operations, whether offensive or defensive. The lessons of the Maurya and post-Maurya periods were not totally lost upon Indian princes in the period under review, and as a result, we find ***a new orientation of the Gupta methods of warfare.***

It is quite likely that immediately after the overthrow of the Kuṣāṇa power and with the growth of Magadhan imperialism under the Guptas, there was ***a reorganisation on the Scythian model of the Gupta army.*** More and more reliance came to be placed on ***heavy-armed horsemen.*** We learn from Raghuvaṁśa, Canto IV (Raghu's conquest in Aparānta and the Western region as depicted by Kālidāsa) that each horseman was equipped with a coat of mail going down to knees, a long lance, a powerful bow and a quiver

of arrows. The cavalrymen marched in well-ordered lines and in close formations. *Chariot formations of earlier days were conspicuous by their absence, having lost their effectiveness in Indian warfares even from the Fourth Century A.D.* "The whole conception of warfare as developed in the fourth canto of the Raghuvaṁśa", writes Dr. Agarwal,[83] "is based on *movement.* The idea of entrenched forces, however well defended, does not seem to have played an important part in Gupta strategy. The entire strategy of the Hūṇa war, which swayed from the north-western region right upto Ayodhyā and Allāhābād, was developed on *mobile fighting columns and garrisons.* It seems that after the decline of the Gupta power when the lessons of Hūṇa warfare had been forgotten, there was a reversal to the old strategy of static defences."

With the fall of the Guptas in about 550 A.D., a brilliant period of ancient India,—a period of political excellence, military glory and cultural progress, ended. In the post-Gupta period the centre of political gravity was shifted from Magadha in the east to Kanauj in the north. The traditional four-fold army, so long the bulwark of national and territorial defence, was undergoing a change. The disappearance of chariot or its partial subordination to elephant corps seemed to be a new feature. The abandonment of mobile warfare with more reliance on static defences and pitched battles appeared to be the characteristics of the period that followed, although in matters of recruitment, encampment, fortification, battle-array, espionage and general strategical plans, there was no appreciable departure.

83 Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 1949, p. 33.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST KANAUJ EMPIRE AND ITS MILITARY ORGANISATION

DISAPPEARANCE OF CHARIOT OR ITS PARTIAL SUBORDINATION TO ELEPHANT CORPS

(c. 600-650 A.D.)

Although the Hūṇa domination in North-west India was stamped out through the military genius of a number of Indian princes,—Narasiṁha Bālāditya II,[1] son of Tattāgata according to Hiuen Tsang,[2] Yaśodharman of Central India[3] and Prabhākaravardhana[4] of the Puṣyabhūti dynasty of Thāneśvara, the political unity was apparently lost after the fall of the Gupta power in about 550 A.D., and Northern India did not attain at least a semblance of political unity till the glorious days of Harṣa Silāditya (c. 606-647 A.D.). The very fact that India stood divided after the fall of the early Guptas would clearly prove the inability of that empire in its later days to maintain the unity and the consequent weakening of its military strength, so rudely shaken by the Hūṇas from outside and ambitious sāmanta princes or powerful Gupta feudatories from within.

The younger son of Prabhākara, who thundered against the Hūṇas, was a born fighter. The circumstances in

1 Narasiṁha Bālāditya is sometimes identified with Bhānugupta, the hero of 'a very famous battle' fought near Eran in the Central Province (vide AHI, p. 151).

2 Beal. Life, p. 111.

3 CII. III, 146 ff.

4 'A lion to the Hūṇa deer'.

which he was placed during his early years made him conceive the idea of bringing all Northern India under one system of administration. By wars and conquests whose number is legion, Harṣa was able to impose his unquestioned authority over a wide area. Though there is difference of opinion regarding the exact extent of Harṣa's empire, it must have included the Eastern Punjab, Kanauj, the provinces of Ahicchatrā, Śrāvastī and Prāyaga, Magadha and Orissa (AHI, p. 158). His struggle with the Guptas of Mālwa, the subjugation of the Maitrakas of Valabhī, his war with Śaśāṅka, King of the Gauḍas, his last campaign against Koṅgoda (Ganjam district) on the Bay of Bengal saw his empire reach its eastern and western limits. It extended roughly from the Himālayas in the north to the Narmadā in the south. It is difficult at the same time to say from Hiuen Tsang's reference to Harṣa's continuous warfare for six years and his fight with 'Five Indies',—that he conquered the whole of Northern India.[5] In the words of Hiuen Tsang, Harṣa "went from east to west subduing all who were not obedient; the elephants were not unharnessed nor soldiers unhelmeted." At the time he began his conquering career he is said to have commanded "a force of 5,000 elephants, 20,000 cavalry and 50,000 infantry." Referring to the probable annexation of a large portion of Bengal, Dr. Smith, apparently relying on Watters, makes the following observation:

"His (Harṣa's) military resources were so increased that he was able to put in the field 60,000 war elephants and 100,000 cavalry.[6] The non-employment of war chariots in the various campaigns of Harṣa mentioned by Bāṇa-

5 H. B. Vol. I, p. 65.
6 H. C. tr., p. 224-25. Y. C., p. 239.

bhaṭṭa[7] and the importance attached to elephant corps and camel forces[8] would suggest that the chariot as one of the offensive arms of ancient India was coming to...play only an insignificant role in the seventh century A.D., and was about to be eliminated soon altogether. But it would be incorrect to aver that its use stopped with the close of 7th Century. We learn from Hiuen Tsang[9] that Indian generals still rode on four-horsed chariots protected by bodyguards. The only military defeat that Harṣa sustained was that on the bank of the Narmadā. Here he had to yield the palm to Pulakeśī II, the greatest King of the early Cāḷukya dynasty of Vātāpī and Narmadā remained the southern boundary of Harṣa's empire.[10] The physical conformation of his own land and the dauntless spirit of his fighting men, able "to defy ten thousand enemies," accounts for the success of the Cāḷukya ruler and the failure of his northern rival.

The Chinese pilgrim visited Mahārāṣṭra in about 639 A.D. While speaking of the northern potentate's defeat at the hands of Pulakeśī, he describes the warlike habits of the people of the Deccan thus:

> "When they had an injury to avenge they never fail to give warning to their enemy, after which each puts on his cuirass and grasps his spear in his hand. In battle they pursue the fugitives but do not slay

7 Beal. Records, I, p. 83.

8 If the Sabhasad Bakhar is to be believed, in the seventeen century the great Marāṭha leader Shivaji maintained an elephant corps numbering about 1,260, and a camel corps numbering about 3,000 or 1,500.

9 The number of cavalry employed seems incredible Any way, this proves the importance attached to cavalry in the days of Harṣa. For recruitment of horses, see H. C., p. 50.

10 EI VI. p 10. For discussion of the chronology of Harṣa's campaigns, vide Classical Age, pp 108-10.

them who give themselves up. When a general has lost a battle, instead of punishing him corporally, they make him wear women's clothes, and by that force him to sacrifice his own life. The state maintains a body of dauntless champions to the number of several hundreds. Each time they prepare for combat they drink wine to intoxicate them, and then one of these men, spear in hand, will defy ten thousand enemies. If they kill a man met on the road, the law does not punish. Whenever the army commences a campaign braves march in the van to the sound of the drum....No enemy can stand before them. The king, proud of possessing these men and elephants, despises and slights the neighbouring kingdoms.[11]

Some general observations of Hiuen Tsang on the Indian army in the first half of the seventh century may be put down here.

"The chief soldiers of the country are selected from the bravest of the people and as *the sons followed the profession of their fathers*, they soon acquire a knowledge of the art of war. These dwell in garrison around the palace (during peace), but when on an expedition they march in front as an advanced guard. There are four divisions of the army, viz. (1) the Infantry (Pattakāya), (2) the Cavalry (Aśvakāya), (3) the Chariots (Rathakāya) and (4) the Elephants (Hastikāya). The elephants were provided with sharp spears. A leader in a car gives the command, whilst *two attendants on the right and left drive the chariot*, which is drawn by four horses abreast. The general of the soldiers remains in the chariot; he is surrounded by a file of guards,

11 Beal. Life, pp. 146-47.

who keeps close to his chariot wheels. The cavalry spread themselves in front to resist an attack and in case of defeat they carry orders hither and thither. *The infantry by their quick movements contribute to the defence.* These men were chosen for their courage and strength. They carry a long spear and a great shield; sometimes they hold a sabre or sword and advance to the front with impetuosity. All these weapons of war are sharp and pointed. Some of them are these—spears, shields, bows, arrows, swords, sabres, battle-axes, lances, holstes, long javelins and various kinds of slings. All these they have used for ages."[12] Fort-engineering was not a forgotten art in the seventh century. Bāṇa mentions *Suraṅgabheda*[13] and includes it as a part of the curricula of studies prescribed for Prince Candrāpīḍa.[14]

According to one writer,[14a] Upper Bengal, Malwa (Ujjain) and Assam were ruled by their own kings who were probably Harṣa's vassals. It is, therefore, just possible that the Kanaujan sovereign in defending his own realm and extending his conquests had to depend upon his own *standing army* (the "garrison around the palace" during peace?), as also upon the feudal militia assembled at his

12 Beal. Records. I. pp. 82-83. C/o The war weapons in the hands of soldiers represented in the Ajantā frescoes. Burgess—Notes on the Buddhist Rock Temple of Ajantā etc., pp. 11,20,51,67,68,72 etc.

13 Kādamvarī Kale's Edition, p. 125.

14 Dr. Agarwal's observation on the fort-engineering deserves mention. "The technical term, Surraṅga", he writes, "can be understood only after looking at an actual mediaeval fort, e.g. Devagiri. After crossing the moat and the bridge there began a difficult passage through rock as a closed structure entry through which was essential to reach the main palace inside the fort." (Proceedings of the Indian History Congress 1949, p. 33).

14a Aiyenger. Hist. of India Part I., p. 114.

behest by his vassal chiefs. Bhāsakaravarmana, King of Kāmrūpa, for instance, fought against Harṣa's enemies, especially the Gauḍas of Karṇasuvarṇa, as his subordinate ally. Hiuen Tsang has spoken highly of Harṣa's administrative system and of the personal supervision of the realm during most part of the year.

There is, however, no reference to the royal navy or to any naval engagements. But we learn from the Life of Hiuen Tsang[15] that "sometime in 642 A.D. Bhāskara varmana proceeded with his army of elephants 20,000 in number to meet Harṣa at Kajaṅgala near Rājmahal, and his 30,000 *ships* passed along the Ganges to the same direction." The number of ships mentioned is evidently an exaggeration, but does it not give the impression that Harṣa's ally possessed ships and that with the land and naval forces at his command he established his rule over the dominions of Śaśāṅka either for himself or for his suzerain? For whom parts of Bengal were conquered has remained a matter of controversy.[16] The Kingdom of Kāmrūpa possessed a powerful navy. A later evidence suggests that Vaidyadeva, the fovourite minister of Kumārapāla, King of Bengal and Bihar, was in a position to defeat Tiṅgyadeva possibly because he could utilise Assamese navy.[17]

At the time of Hiuen Tsang's visit in India "the national guards are heroes of choice valour as the profession is hereditary, they became adepts in military tactics...they are perfect experts with all the implements of war having been drilled in them for generations."[18] Thus about the military practices in the seventh century we learn quite a lot from

15 Beal. life, p. 172.
16 H. B. I, p. 78.
17 Ep. Ind. II. 351.
18 Beal: Records I. 82.

Hiuen Tsang and Bāṇa. As to the method of recruitment, the standing armies (National guards?) of Harṣa's empire were enlisted *from all classes and the system of local levies is often met with.* This system is as old as the Vedas and its survival in the seventh century is apparent from the following lines:

> "The soldiers are levied according to the requirements of service; they are promised certain payments and are publicly enrolled."[19]

All ancient writers on war, particularly the writers of the Epics and Kauṭilya, have attached great importance to the theatre of war and the position and equipment of camps. In all works dealing with the art of warfare a camp is described as looking like "a fortified town." Bāṇa's account of Harṣa's camp near Maṇitāra[20] fits in with this description and adds strength to Dr. Chakravarty's[21] statement that 'a Hindu camp appears to have retained this character throughout our period.' Bāṇa[22] gives a graphic description of *the Indian army on the march* in the following manner:

> "At the close of the third watch, when all creatures slept and all was still, the marching drum was beaten ...then after a moment's pause, eight sharp strokes were distinctly given anew upon the drum, making up the number of the leagues in the day's march... Commanders mustered crowds of barrack Superintendents...shrill words of command from the Marshals dispelled the slumbers of blinking riders... servants of house builders rolled up yawnings and clothscreens belonging to tents and marquees...Many

19 Beal: Records, pp. 87-88.
20 H. C. Tr., p. 46 ff.
21 AWAI, p. 19.
22 H. C. tr. pp. 199-211.

elephant attendants were pressed to convey the stores...the carriages of high-born nobles' wives were thronged with roguish emissaries sent by princes of rank...first ran bannerbearers...when the adorable sun arose, the signal conch rang out repeatedly announcing the moment of the King's arraying the army...the company of feudatory kings who were awaiting his arrival greeted him, and bowed with bodies dutifully bent down...the emperor in his turn, distributed among them tokens of his favour, such as quarter glances, side glances, full glances, raised eye-brows, half-smiles, jests, plays upon words, enquiries after their health, return greetings, careless movements of the brow, and instructions according to their several deserts. After the review of the army by the emperor was over, the march began."[23]

There are reasons for drawing the conclusion from the foregoing review that upto the end of the seventh century ancient India's military tradition and organisation remained substantially unbroken in theory, although in practice and in detail traces of weakness were fast appearing. India's

23 A similar description of the march of the army of an emperor found in Hindi poem by Shridar Muralidar of Allahabad has been quoted in Irvine's great book,—The Army of the Indian Moghuls (p. 206). The high-born ladies accompanying the army referred to by Bāṇa shows *the influence of the harem.* Māgha's Śiśupāla-Vadha describes prostitutes as camp-followers. It is difficult to understand if it was the practice throughout the Hindu period. We, however, find a departure in the time of the Hindu ruler Shivaji who disavowed the system, as "no woman, female slave or dancing girl was to be allowed to accompany the army".

See also the description of the Kuru Camp given in Mabht. Udyoga-Parva.

national defence was on its trial in the early part of the eighth century when she had to face the Arab army in Sind. Dr. Chakravarty's[24] contention that the use of chariots in ancient India's warfare had been in decline for many centuries and that its use became less and less in the post-Mauryan period, is based on carefully collected evidence, both epigraphic and literary. The cause of its disappearance from the military arena seems to be its cumbrous nature, its unsuitability for employment in every field and the growing usefulness of cavalry and mobile horsemen realised from past experience. It is difficult to understand why the elephant corps was not discontinued also. The reason probably is that there was no better substitute. It caused no doubt havoc in the ranks of enemy often deciding the fate of battles quickly, but its defects were as great as its usefulness. In the historical period, discomfiture was more due to the employment of elephant corps than to that of chariots. Śukranīti,[25] a late *work on Nīti Śāstra,* while dealing with the composition of the army, gives a warning to Indian kings in the following manner:

> 'He (the king) shall have in the army a predominance of foot-soldiers, a medium quantity of horse, a small amount of elephant force, equal number of bulls and camels, but ***never elephant in excess.***'

More than a century elapsed between the expulsion of the Hūṇas and the Arab invasion of Sind. Unless some ***organisational defect*** had crept in in the meantime due to political or social causes, an easy success on the part of the Arabs would have been somewhat difficult. India's national defence was not then on its last legs. The Arab infiltration was confined to a limited area and the Arab rule in Western India was short-lived.

24 AWAI, pp. 25-26.

25 B. K. Sarkar's tr. 219.

CHAPTER SIX

THE BACKGROUND OF THE ARAB AND TURKISH MENACE

EFFORTS OF SOME IMPORTANT RULING DYNASTIES

THE BRĀHMAN CACH DYNASTY OF SIND, THE HINDU ŚĀHIS OF AFGANISTAN AND THE PUNJAB, THE GURJARA-PRATIHĀRAS OF KANAUJ, THE CAHAMĀNAS OF ŚĀKAMBHARĪ, AJMERE AND DELHI AND THE GĀHAḌVĀLAS OF KANAUJ AND VĀRĀṆASĪ FOR NATIONAL DEFENCE

A New Grouping of States Through Social and Political Changes

The death of Harsa Śilāditya and the collapse of his empire mark the end of an age. A usurper Arjuna by name seized the throne and tried to maintain his power in vain. Then the empire was temporarily revived in the eighth century by one Yaśovarman who was defeated in the first half of that century by Lalitāditya, the most powerful king of Kāśmīra, a king whose digvijaya is recorded in Rājataraṅgiṇī.[1] His efforts proved futile, and Kanauj became the target of attack from many sides.[2] and did not see better days until the capture of the city by Nāgabhaṭa II sometime before 836 A.D. The period from the death of Harṣa to the invasion of Sultān Mahmūd of Ghazna is often called the period of Rājput ascendancy, as in most parts of India

1 Stein's Eng. tr. Vol. I, pp. 88-92.

2 'What Babylon was to the martial races of Western Asia, what Rome was to the Teutonic barbarians and Byzantium to the mediaeval world Eastern and Southern Europe, that was Mahodayaśrī to the uprising dynasties of the eighth and ninth centuries A. D.' quoted in AHI, p. 161.

ruling families styled themselves 'Rājputs' endowed with a high sense of military honour. If the period under review saw the absence of a superior controlling force like that of the Mauryas, the Guptas and the Puṣyabhūtis in Indian politics, and if the country was stuffed with a bundle of petty independent states with ever-shifting boundaries and perpetual jealousies culminating in occasional intra-Indian warfares,' it was, nevertheless, the happiest period, as no foreign inroad except that of the Arabs in Sind and Gujarat thundered at her gates.

In order to grasp the apparent vitality of the period due to immunity from foreign raids, we must now turn to the history of Rājput families and clans who played a worthy part in the military history of the period, and trace their origin and its significance as briefly as possible. The Rājputs suddenly appear on the stage of Indian history in the seventh and eighth centuries, win kingdom, set themselves up as a Kṣatriyas of ancient Vedic times, become ardent lovers of their country and religion, and maintain their supremacy in the mountain fortresses of Rājputanā till the end of the eighteenth century. The question of their origin has been subjected to much discussion and the theories about it are perplexing. Col. Tod in his Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan holds the view that they were of Scythian descent and entered India along with the Hūṇas and Gurjaras. His view is shared by many writers including Dr. Smith, who, while agreeing with Col. Tod that the Rājputs of Northern India were the descendants of barbarian foreign immigrants into Rājputanā, is of opinion that some of the principal clans of the south are of indigeneous origin, being descendants of the so-called aboriginal tribes such as Gonds, Bhars, Kols etc.[3] The tradition preserved in the

3 EHI 4th Ed., p. 429.

'*Chand Raisā*, advances the *Agnikula theory*. The view that they were descendants of ancient Kṣatriyas being incapable or credence, the foreign origin theory has gained general acceptance.[4]

The intermixture of Indians and foreigners that had been taking place for some centuries seemed both deep and unconscious, and an infusion of fresh blood added to their courage and fighting capacity. The military ardour of the Rājputs, it may be presumed, was foreign, their patriotism and devotion to religion was Indian. The new grouping of states on the ruins of Harṣa's empire had its advantages. It brought in a new aristocracy and a new martial spirit, and out of this process of assimilation a stronger, though not a united India, ready to resist external aggression, emerged. 'A high feeling of chivalry and honour, of independençe and patriotism animated all Rājputs, and this sameness had much to do with the fusion of the various clans which had ethnologically stood apart from one another.[5] Despite occasional struggle among themselves for

4 Scholars like Dr. Smith and Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar support the foreign origin theory, while well known writers like C. V. Vaidya and Gourī Śankar Ojhā stick to the belief that the Rājputs were the descendants of ancient Kṣatriyas. Anthropologists do not accept the foreign origin theory. Dr. B. N. Dutta, on the other hand, observes, 'It is not impossible that many of the Śakas and the ruling class of the Gurjara tribes became Kṣatriyas and got the new affiliation Rajaputra or son of a rāja, The new name differentiates them at once from the ancient Kṣatriyas. (Studies in Indian Social Polity, p. 257). Dr. D. C. Ganguly entertains douht about the foreign origin theory and says that 'there is no strength in the argument that the Rājputs were originally foreigners as they are not mentioned in any literature of the early period ... and that a correct solution of the problem is yet to be arrived at.' (Proceedings of the Indian History Congress 1949, p. 117).

5 Ishwari Prosad. A short History of Muslim Rule, p. 15.

power, these brave Rājputs opposed tooth and nail the advance of the Arabs, Turks and Afghans. Even after their power of resistance had frittered away, they remained stout defenders of their hearth and home. The Śisodia house Mewār showed the house of Tīmūr an indomitable spirit of independence, and even those who chose to lend support to the imperialistic scheme of the Moghuls proved their worth by being indispensable adjuncts to the Moghul Army and Administration. The military history of the country from the eighth century to the fall of the Moghuls was dominated by the Rājputs.

A. The Brāhmaṇa Cach Dynasty of Sind

While the empire of Harṣa was falling to pieces and the centrifugal tendency was gathering momentum, a great religion,—Islam was taking shape in the deserts of Arabia. Islam was destined to bring in its train a big empire, extending from the Straits of Gibraltar in the West to the Western seaboard of India in the East. Within twenty years of the Prophet's death the banner of Islam was planted in Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Persia and Afghanistan. It was the rapidly-moving eastward drive of this new faith that threatened India in the first quarter of the eighth century. Easy of access along the coast of the Arabian sea, Sind was the first slice of land to be overwhelmed by the Arabs.[6] It is necessary at this stage to recount briefly the political history of the Kingdom of Sind with special reference to its ruling dynasty, boundaries and defences on the eve of the Arab invasion. The Arab attack on Sind was not a rash or ill-conceived undertaking. It was preceded by a number of expeditions intended to pillage the coasts of India. At first, they were a sort of punitive expeditions against the

6 Syed Ameer Ali. A Short History of the Saracens, p. 104.

pirates. The immediate cause of the appearance of the armies of Islam in Sind was supplied by the seizure of ships bearing presents from the King of Ceylon to al-Hajāj, Governor of Irāq. All these were to end in the organised invasion of Sind by Muhammad Bin Kāsim in about 712-713 A.D. and its ultimate conquest by that excellent Arab General whose exploits are "one of the romances of history."

The only book from which anything reliable is known about Sind from the sixth century A.D. to its conquest by the Arabs is the Chachnāma (also called Tārikh-i-Hind-Wa-Sind or Fatḥnāma), a Persian work written in the time of and dedicated to Nāsir-ud-Dīn Qabācha (613 A.H.-1216 A.D.). The chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang visited Sind in the middle of the seventh century. His account refers to the reigning king, "who was of the Śūdra caste (Shu-to-lo)...*a sincere* man and a believer in Buddhism."[7] The Chahnāma furnishes details. According to it, Brāhmaṇa Cach (643-671 A.D.), his brother Candar and his son *Dāhir* (679-712 *A.D.*) occupied the throne after the Rāi dynasty which had ruled from 450-463. The last member of the Rāis was Rāi Sāhasi II (c: 643 A.D.).

Cach, who succeeded the Rāi rulers, was a vigorous king, and administered an extensive area whose frontiers touched Kāśmīra and included Mukrām and Śiwistan. His territory comprised the whole of the lower Indus Valley plus some portions of Beluchistan. He is said to have augmented his power by defeating a king named Mahrat who is described as the chief of Jaipur, Jodhpur or Chitor in about the first year of the Hijirā (623 A.D.).[8] What land and naval forces if any, Brāhmaṇa Cach and his son

7 Y. C., Vol. II. p. 252. Elliot I, pp. 410-11,
8 DHNI, Vol. I, p. 4-5.

Dāhir had in readiness to resist the Arabs, who began pillaging the coast as early as 637 A.D. in the Caliphate of Omar, we have practically no means of ascertaining. No ship was stationed to guard the western coastal belt which was frequently the scene of piracy and was ravaged by searovers over whom Dāhir had apparently no control. In reply to al-Hājâj's request to set free the Muslim woman captured on ship by the Mêds of ad-Dâibul (Debāl) Dāhir sent the following message:

'Pirates over whom I have no control, captured.'[9] This was regarded as an unsatisfactory reply and the Arab governor of Irāq organised the expedition on a grand scale. The Arab naval attack on Tānah (Modern Thānā near Bombay) and Barwas (Broach) was the forerunner of the final conquest of Sind by Muhammad bin Kāsim. There is nothing on record to show that the Arab fleet with military equipment was ousted by the Indian ruler. It saw the defeat-and death of the ruler of Sind whose capital was at Alor.[10] In the spring of 712 A.D. Muhammad bin Kāsim at the head of a large and well-equipped army landed in *Debāl*,[11] and at once began the offensive. The first act of Arab aggression was to pull down the red flag floating over a big temple. Elphinstone[12] writes:

9 Fūtuh al-Buldan tr. Hitti Mergotten, pp. 215-16.

10 Alor has been generally identified with Rohré on the Indus.

11 Debāl is generally placed by most scholars near the port of Karachi, but there are others who place it near Taṭṭa on the left bank of the main Indus Channel. Vide DHNI I, p. 7. fn.

Relics of what is considered to be the earliest Muslim settlement in India-Debāl, the place where Muh. Bin Kāsim effected landing, have been recently found on a mound 35 miles north-east of Karachi. The Pakistan Government will soon undertake excavation work. Reported in the 'Statesman" of January 22, 1951.

12 History of India—Cowell's ed., p. 308.

'While Kāsim was considering the difficulties opposed to him, he was informed by some of his prisoners that the safety of the place was believed to depend upon the flag which was displayed on the towers of that temple. He directed his engines against that sacred standard and at last succeeded in bringing it to the ground, which occasioned so much dismay in the garrison as to cause the speedy fall of the place.'

A clash soon took place, and the Hindus, who came to oppose, were defeated by the Muslims. The city presented a scene of massacre and rapine. After taking Debāl, a famous seaport town, the Arab general marched upon Nèrun (part of Brāhamanābad, Elliot I. p. 156) the inhabitants of which submitted. He crossed the Indus by constructing a bridge of boats. The rapid advance of Arab troopers and the news of their crossing the Indus became a source of anxiety to Dāhir. Realising the supreme need of the hour, he fell upon Rewār—(Raor). A terrible battle ensued. "The enemy", says Lane Poole,[13] "unable to oppose the landing, fell back upon Rewār, where the Arabs beheld for the first time the imposing array of chiefs, mounted on armoured war-elephants and led by their King Dāhir. Naptha arrows, however, disordered the elephants and set fire to the howdahs; the king was slain, the Hindus fled, and the Muslims glutted themselves with massacre." At this hour of national crisis Dāhir's wife Rānī Bāi and her son, when the Hindus, defeated and leaderless, were completely disorganised, stationed themselves in the fortress of Rewār, determined to offer stubborn resistance to the enemy till everything was given up for lost. This incident reminds us of the heroic resistance put up by the Carthaginians

13 Medieval India, p. 9.

against Rome during the Third Punic War (146 B.C.), when 'the whole city was turned into a workshop of arms in which men and women in relays laboured day and night... the women cutting off their hair to be twisted into cords for the engines.'[14]

The Queen, 'reviewed the remnant of her garrison, 15 thousand in number in the fort, and forthwith stones from mangonels and ballistas, as well as arrows and javelins began to be rained down thickly upon the Arabs, who were encamped under the walls of the fort.'[15] In siege operations Indians, it seems, used, as in the Medieval Europe, the battering-ram, the catapult and the movable tower as the principal offensive weapons.[16] But the Arabs did not lose heart. They conducted the siege with courage and hope and the fort ultimately capitulated. The heroic queen with her retinue burnt herself in Indian fashion to save the honour of her country.[17] Muhammad bin Kāsim then occupied the fort, and marched upon Brāhmanābād (modern Hyderabad), and within a short time his conquering zeal brought Multān,[18] the most important city in the Upper Indus, under his control. With the occupation of

14 Shuckburg—History of Rome, p. 520.

15 Ishwari P.—A short History of Muslim rule, pp. 33-34.

16 Thompson & Johnson—An Introduction to Medieval Europe, p. 317.

17 Such incidents are not rare in Indian history. The Rājput heroes and ladies offered strong resistance to the enemy in the Turco-Afghan and Moghul periods, especially during the sieges of Chitor, "the sacred stronghold of Rajput liberty."

18 "For three centuries Multān (ancient Kāsyapapur) remained the outpost of Islam; but the occupation was in the main military and there was no general settlement of Muh. invaders or conversion of Hindu inhabitants till the Ghaznivid period." Imperial Gaz. XVIII, p. 25.

Multān, Ṣind passed virtually into Arab hands. One is not justified, however, in calling it a facile conquest. The fight put up by Dāhir and his family was not tame or unworthy. The ruler of Sind had not been wholeheartedly supported by all sections of his people and as usual, treachery had its part. "The conquest of Sind" says one writer, "should not be regarded as indicating in a general way the superiority of the Muslims over the Indians from a military point or view...To the inexplicable want of strategy on the part of Dāhir and the treachery of the Buddhists of the South, we must add the base betrayal of the chief officers and grandees of Sind to account for its ruler's ignominous end."[18a] The rise to power of the Rājputs in the seventh century and the growth of orthodox forms of Hinduism had much to do with the discomfiture of the Brāhmaṇa King Dāhir. Thus, "the Jāts and the agricultural classes who helped Muhammad bin Kāsim in his invasion of Sind, did so not out of love for the conqueror but to wreak vengeance on the Brahmins whose tyranny they could not forget, and especially on King Dāhir, the Brahmin usurper[19] of the throne of Sind whose previous king was a Buddhist."[19a] The Chachnāma[20] writes:—'The Arab army marched on till it reached the fort of Bait, and all the horsemen were clad in iron armour. Pickets were posted in all directions, and orders were given to dig an entrenchment round the camp and to deposit the baggage there. Muhammad bin Kāsim then advanced from the fort of Bait towards Rewār,

18a Quoted in 'Famous battles in Indian History' by T. G. Subrahmanyam, p. 150.

19 Y. C., Vol II. p. 252. describes Dāhir's remote predecessor as one who was Śūdra by caste and Buddhist in faith.

19a Mitra—The Vision of India, p. 87.

20 Elliot I. p. 167-68.

till he arrived at a place called Jewār (Jaipur). Between Rewār and Jewār was a lake on which Dāhir had stationed a select body of troops to reconnoitre.'

This proves that Dāhir did not neglect to take precautionary measures. The Chachnāma[21] further tells us that Dāhir employed about 500 Arab troopers and placed them in charge of a Muslim general. He was, therefore, aware of the strength and serviceability of the Arab mounted soldiers, having already used them against his own enemies. After all, it was not a *Veni-Vidi-Vici* affair, and the army and the machines employd in the task were enormous. Commenting on the view shared by Firishta that the conquest of Sind was effected by six thousand men, Elliot[22] observes:

> "The more correct statement given by our Arab authorities show that independent of an advanced guard under Abu-l-Asand Jahān, which was ordered to join Muhammed Kāsim on the borders of Sind, there were 6,000 picked cavalry from Syria and Iraq, 6,000 armed Cāmel riders, thoroughly equipped for military operations, with a baggage train of 3,000 Bactrian camels, which however, Mīr Ma'sūm converts into 3,000 infantry. In Makrān Muhammad Kāsim was joined by the governor, Muhammad Hārūn, with other reinforcements, and five catapults, together with necessary ammunition, were transported by sea to Debāl. The number of men conveyed by the naval squadron may be estimated by the fact that we find one catapult alone requiring no less than five hundred men work it....Besides these Arab troops, we find the Jāts and Mêds

21 Elliot I. 156.
22 Elliot Appendix, p. 434-435.

enlisting under Muhammad Kāsim's banner, which independent of its moral effect in dividing national sympathies and relaxing the unanimity of defence against foreign aggression, must have been of incalculable benefit to him, in his disproportionate excess of cavalry which could be but of little service in a country intersected by rivers, swamps and canals."

Though culturally of great import, the Arab conquest of Sind was a failure politically,—'a mere episode in the history of India and of Islam,—a triumph without results', and it affected only 'a fringe of that vast country.'[23] Mir Mā'sūm stated that two years after the death of Kāsim, the people of India rebelled, and threw off their yoke, and the country from Debālpur to the Salt sea only remained the dominions of the Khalifa.[24] The inability of the Arabs to impose their authority on lands beyond Sind probably suggests the volume of opposition given to the foreigners by the Gurjara-Pratīhāras, the Cāḷukyas and the Kārkoṭas of Western, Southern and Northern India respectively.[25] The Arab general of Sind made serious efforts to extend the bounds of his dominion and undertook several expeditions for the purpose. Balādhurī would have us believe that Juṇāyḍ (the governor) defeated and killed Dāhir's son, Hullīshāh, who had 'apostatized and opposed his advance after a naval battle.[26] It is further learnt that the Arab advance received a definite setback when the Lāṭa prince of South Gujarat Abanī Janāśraya repulsed a formidable Tājik invasion in 738-39 which affected the kingdoms of Sindhu, Cutch, Saurāṣṭra etc.[27] The Gwalior inscription of Bhoja I of the Gurjara-Pratīhāra line states that Nāgabhaṭa I,

23 CHI III, p. 10.
24 Elliot I, p. 438.
25 AHI, p. 182.
26 KFB, Pt. II, pp. 226-27.
27 The Nausari Grant: Bombay Gazetteer I. 109.

King of Avanti, defeated a mlechha ruler in about 725 A. D.[28] The Rājputs of Western India, therefore, played the same part as Charles Martel of the Merovingian dynasty did on the plain of Tours (Poitiers) in 732 A.D.[29], or the Elector of Saxony, the Duke af Lorraine and Sobieski of Poland did under the walls of Vienna in 1683. The Indian princes apparently rose to the occasion inspired by a new martial spirit and patriotism, and further progress of the Arab arms was arrested.[30] Many causes no doubt contributed to the extinction of the Arab suzerainty in Sind, such as distance, indifference of the Caliphate, heavy cost of administration in proportion to its revenue, but the will of the neighbouring Hindu states to drive the Arabs bag and baggage was not perhaps a negligible factor. The Hindu military defence was still very strong. A gap of nearly three centuries intervenes between the Arab aggression and the Turkish raids whose effect was permanent.

B. *The Hindu Śāhis of Afghanistan and the Punjab*

The history of Afghanistan and the Punjab from the overthrow of the Kuṣāṇa power by the Brāhmaṇa Kollar to the day when the kingdom was destroyed by Sultān Mahmūd of Ghaznī is an instructive study in military history. In the early part of the tenth century Jayapāla, the most eminent representative of the Hindu Sāhis ruled over an extensive empire with his capital at Waihind (Udabhaṇḍapur). We learn from Firishta[31] that the do-

28 I. A. 1911, p. 240.
29 Meyers—Medieval History, p. 106.
30 For reasons why the Arabs did not follow up their annexation of Sind by further territorial conquests in the interior of the country, see - Elphinstone—History of India, pp. 305-306.
31 T. F. Brigg's tr. I, p, 15.

minions of Jayapāla extended in length from Sirhind in the Punjab and Lamghān (Kābul) and in breadth from the Kingdom of Kāśmīr to Multān. The rise of the Turkish principality of Ghaznī in the same century and the territorial adjacency of Hindu and Muslim rulers became, before long, a fruitful cause of conflict.[32] The existence of a powerful Hindu monarchy at the strategic point of India's northwestern frontier and the growing fear of Turkish raids on Hindu territories invested Jayapāla with a heavy responsibility which he shouldered for a pretty long time in the interest of India's national defence. In the words of Firishta,

"He (Jayapāla) resided in the fort of Bhatinda for the convenience of taking steps for *opposing the Muhommedans.*" On the military strength and valour of this prince depended to a large extent the safety of the interior, as he occupied the key position on the gateway to India. When that line of defence was broken through, practically all Hindusthān lay exposed to Muslim arms. The raid of the Ghaznivides began even during the life-time of Alptigīn (c. 933-963 A. D.). Under his successor Sabuktigīn the situation rapidly changed, and it became quite impossible for the Śāhis to sit idle and tolerate Turkish aggression. Noticing the insecurity of his Western dominions, Jayapāla gathered a vast army and marched on Lamghān[33] (c. 988) to force the Sultān to abandon his frequent raids. A battle took place near Lamghān in which the Hindu king was defeated and compelled to sign a treaty. During the negotiations for

32 Preliminaries of this conflict fully discussed by Dr. H. C. Ray, DHNI Vol. I., pp. 80-81.

33 'A city celebrated for its great strength and abounding in wealth' Elliot vol II (Indian Edition, p. 22).

peace the Śāhi monarch is said to have forwarded a spirited note to Sabuktigīn to this effect:

> 'You have heard and known the nobleness of India, now that, in seasons of extremity, they fear not death or destruction. They run the edge of the sword over those who wrong them, where there is no means of escaping the blade. In affairs of honour and renown, we would place ourselves upon the fire like roast meat, and upon the dagger like the sun-rays.'[34]

Does not the above quotation from 'Utbī' prove the determination of Jayapāla to brave all perils in the national cause?

Jayapāla violated the treaty he concluded by surrendering four forts and fifty elephants.[35] That was the cause of the second military action. In this connection Dr. H. C. Ray[36] observes,—'The Muslim historians, as usual, throw all the blame on Jayapāla, but it is not unlikely that this was a mere pretext for renewing hostilities on both sides.' Jayapāla, who enjoyed the confidence of Indian princes, lost no time in organising a confederacy of Hindu princes, consisting of Delhi, Ajmere, Kalinjar and Kanauj who helped him with men and money.[37] Inspite of his best efforts to crush the formidable foe Jayapāla was defeated for the second time

34 KY, p. 37.

35 According to 'Utbi (Elliot II. 27) the terms offered by the Śāhi king were—'by way of ransom 1,000 packets of 1,000 dinars sterling and five stables full of elephants'...by giving up 'some cities of Hindusthān and some fortresses within the heart of his kingdom.'

36 DHNI I, p. 83.

37 T. F. Brigg's tr., p. 18. According to the CHI Vol. III, p. 507, this confederacy was formed not against Subuktigin, but against Maḥmūd in 1001 A. D.

at Lamghān in about 991 A.D. The army assembled in his last expedition against Ghaznī was by no means small and untrained. The Muslim historians like Firishta, Nizām-ud-Dīn, and as a matter of fact all the authorities have stated that Jayapāla's army consisted of 100,000 cavalry and many elephants and 'an innumerable host of foot' and that it looked 'like the boundless ocean and in number like the ants and locusts of the wilderness.' The Hindu reverses were apparently due to the superior generalship of the Sulṭān. After Subuktigīn, his successor Maḥmūd took up the struggle and continued it in full vigour till the Śāhis were completely annihilated. Himself an intrepid general and an ardent follower of Islam, Maḥmūd heard of the fabulous wealth of Hind. He inherited his father's enmity to the Śāhis and fell upon their territory at the head of a large army. With the sole object of revenge and plunder, he raided the Indian territories several times, undertaking one expedition almost every year between 1001 and 1025 A.D. In his second expedition he attacked Jayapāla. The latter was taken by surprise and had to face the enemy before his mobilisation was complete. A hard contested battle took place on the 8th Muharram, 392 A.H. (1001 A.D.). Jayapāla was defeated and taken prisoner. After release, he abdicated in favour of his son, Ānandapāla. Jayapāla's thirty years' struggle with the Ghaznivides ended in a failure. It now became the duty of his successor to save himself and his country against overwhelming odds. On a new pretext but clearly to settle the old score Maḥmūd invaded the territory of Ānandapāla in 1004. After pillaging Bhera[38] and Multān, the Sultan fell upon Lahore finally in 1008 A.D. This attack was of a serious

38 Vijayarāja, the ruler of the principality of Bherā (Bhatiah) the impregnability of which has been attested by Muslim his-

kind, and there was no lack of preparations on the part of Ānandapāla. Thus writes Firishta:[39]

> "Ānandapāla, hearing of his intentions, sent ambassadors on all sides inviting the assistance of other princes of Hindusthān, who now considered the expulsion of the Muhammedans from India as a sacred duty. Accordingly the rājas of Ujjain, Gwalior, Kanauj, Delhi and Ajmere entered into a confederacy, and collecting their forces, advanced towards the Punjab with the greatest army that had yet taken the field... The Hindu women on this occasion sold their jewels and melted down their golden ornaments (which they sent from distant parts) to furnish resources for the war; and the Gukkars and other warlike tribes joining the army, surrounded the Mahommedans, who were obliged to entrench their camp."

Commenting on the war efforts of the Śāhis the Cambridge History of India[40] remarks:

> "The number and consequences of his allies are perhaps exaggerated, but it is evident from Mahmūd's excessive caution that Ānandapāla had received a considerable accession of strength and that the army which he led into the field was very different from

torians like 'Utbī and Firishta, is presumed to have played the part of a second Poros. The place was taken by Mahmūd, but the story of defence sheds a lustre on the heroism of the ruler, who 'relying on his lofty hill and drunk in the pride of his numerous followers, came out of the city...and stood the engagement. The battle raged for three days outside the citywalls, and he did not think of escape till the fortress was besieged.' (Vide DHNI I, pp. 87-88).

39 T. F. Vol. II, p. 46.

40 Vol. II, p. 16.

that which Maḥmūd had so easily brushed aside on his way to Multān."

How the battle raged and how ultimately Ānandapāla went down is learnt from the following lines of Firishta:[41]

"Maḥmūd...ordered 6,000 archers to the front to endeavour to provoke the enemy to attack his entrenchments. The archers were opposed by Gukkars, who inspite of the King's effort and presence, repulsed his light troops and followed them so closely that no less than 30,000 Gukkars with their heads and feet bare and armed with various weapons, penetrated into the Mahommedans lines, when a dreadful carnage ensued, and in a few minutes 5,000 Mahommedans were slain. The enemy were at length cut off as fast they advanced, the attacks became fainter and fainter till on a sudden the elephant upon which the prince who commanded the Hindus rode, becoming unruly from the effects of the nephtha balls, and the flight of arrows, turned and fled. The circumstances produced a panic amongst the Hindus, who seeing themselves deserted by their general, gave way and fled also."

It is clear that but for the operation of one cause, viz, the havoc caused by Ānandapāla's elephant the battle might have remained indecisive for sometime and the circumstancs might have changed for the better. His successor Trilocanapāla[42] was, however, not devoid of heroic virtues like

41 T. F. Vol. I, pp. 46-47.

42 Dr. H. C. Ray (DHNI I, p. 95) seems to believe, on the authority of Kalhaṇa (Rājataraṅgiṇī Eng. tr. Vol. I. 107), that in the last days of his struggle with Maḥmūd he sought and obtained the armed assistance of the Kashmiran King Saṅgrā-

Rājyapāla of Kanauj and showed the last flicker of determination of opposing Maḥmūd till he was killed in battle in 1021 A.D.[43] His death created a chasm which could not be filled by another ruler. The Śāhis disappeared as an independent power and their wholesale annihilation is surely indicative of Hindu India's political misfortune.

The Somnāth Expedition is considered to be the most devastating military operation undertaken by Sulṭān Maḥmūd in Western India. It took place either in 1023 or 1024 A.D. The authorities disagree on the exact date. But in the desert region of Rājputanā this successful raider is said to have met with a rebuff at the hands of the Rājputs. An old Persian Chronicle[44] preserves an account which runs as follows:

> "Shah Maḥmūd took to his heels in dismay and saved his life, but many of his followers of both sexes were captured , , , , , Turks, Afghans and Moghul female prisoners; if they happened to be virgins, they were accepted as wives by Indian soldiers... the bowels of others, however, were cleansed by means of emetics and purgatives, and thereafter, the captives were married to men of similar rank."[45]

The truth of the incident quoted above remains to be tested before it is accepted in toto. The measures adopted by the Rājputs look like an attempt at absorption of foreigners by a process of purgation.

marāja (c. 1003-1028 A. D.). This of course could not change the fate of the Śāhis and consequently of India.

43 Sachau II, p. 13.

44 The Tārik-i-Sorāth, tr. by Ranchodji Amarji, Bombay 1882, p. 112.

45 Quoted in K. M. Munshi's—'The Glory that was Gurjaradeśa.' Part III, p. 140.

The kingdom of Kāśmīra, then ruled by the Lohara dynasty, did not feel the full weight of Turkish arms nor did it submit to the Turuṣkus till two centuries had elapsed. The following note about Kāśmīra by Alberūnī[46] deserves mention:

"Kashmir lies on a plateau surrounded by high inaccessible mountains. The south and east of the country belong to the Hindus, the west to the various kings...the inhabitants are particularly anxious about the natural strength of their country and therefore take always much care to *keep a strong hold upon the entrances and roads leading into it.* In consequence it is very difficult to have commerce with them"

We learn from Rājataraṅgiṇī[47] that Sultān Mahmūd after his victory on the Tosi (modern Punch) over Trilocanapāla of Lahore in 1013 A.D. advanced towards the kingdom of Kāśmīra and came away laden with immense booty. In 1015 he renewed his attack, and Firishta[48] gives an account of his ineffective Kāśmīra campaign thus:

Mahmūd in the year A H 406 revisited Kashmir with his army in order to punish some revolted chiefs and to besiege some forts which he had not reduced in his former expedition. The first of these forts was Lokhot, remarkable on account of its height and strength, and which entirely defeated the king's utmost efforts; for, *not being able to reduce it during the summer season*, he was obliged, on the approach of winter to abandon his enterprise and return to Ghaznī."[49]

46 Sachau I, p. 206
47 Stein, Eng. tr., Vol. I, p. 107.
48 Brigg's tr. I, pp. 54-55.
49 The historian of Kāśmīra dwells upon the efforts made by

No further attempt at subjugation of the secluded valley was made either by the Ghaznivides or by Muhammad Ghūrī. Well protected by nature, Kāśmīra earned a respite for nearly two centuries.

C. *The Second Kānyakubja Empire* (*c.*800-1194 *A.D.*)

(I) *The Gurjara-Pratīhāras of Kanauj*

In the ninth century Kanauj once again entered upon a period of expansion and glory under the Pratīhāras. She occupied an excellent position in the Indo-Gangetic plain, being eminently fit to be the capital of a big empire.[49a] It was a fortified city on the Ganges and was converted into a magnificient, wealthy and well fortified city nearly four miles long and a mile broad, furnished with numerous lofty buildings and adorned with many tanks and buildings.' The greatest king of the house was Bhoja I. Epigraphic evidence[50] proves the vastness of his empire which extended

the Śāhi ruler after his defeat and their reaction to the Ghaznivide ruler thus:

'The Hāmmira did not breathe freely, thinking of the superhuman powers of the illustrious Trilocanapāla' (Rājataraṅgiṇī tr. Vol. I, p. 107).

49a For the strategic advantages of Kanauj, vide Beal: the Travels of Fa-hien XVIII, p. xliii; Watters: Y. C., I. p. 341 and Cunningham A.G.I., p. 436.

50 Inscription Nos. 542, 544 and 710 of Kielhorn's List (Ep, Ind. Vol. V Appendix) & others; EHI, 4th Ed, pp. 293-94.

A large number of epigraphs prove that their empire under Mihir Bhoja and Mahendrapāla extended from the Karnāl district in the Punjab to Bihar, and from the Kathiawār peninsula in the west to North Bengal in the east.

from the Cis-Sutlej districts of the Punjab to the borders of Bengal. Bhoja's successor Mahendrapāla retained unimpaired the territories that he had inherited. The frequent onslaughts on the Pratīhāra power by the Rāṣṭrakūṭas of the Deccan, especially that of Indra III in about 916 A.D., destroyed the vitality of the empire, and so when Sulṭān Maḥmūd attacked Kanauj in 1018, the Pratīhāra Empire had lost its early military strength and energy. Râjyapāla is said to have submitted readily to the Sultan Maḥmūd of Ghaznī.

As the eleventh century approached, Kanauj fell on evil days. Maḥmūd of Ghaznī sapped its strength in 1018 A.D. From that day to the battle of Tarāin in 1192 there was practically no paramount power in Northern India. The history of post-Pratīhāra Kanauj of the Gāhaḍvālas under Govindacandra and his grandson,—that of Ajmere-Delhi under the Tomāras and the Chauhūnas, though otherwise full of interest, is a woeful record of disunity, disruption and discord so far as India's integrity and national defence were concerned. The last bulwark of Hindu defence crumbled to pieces in the second battle of Tarāin (1192 A.D).

(II) *The Gāhāḍvālas of Kanauj and Vārāṇasī*

Candradeva of the Gāhāḍvāla clan is considered to be the founder of the Gāhāḍvāla or Rāṭhor ruling dynasty in the second half of the eleventh century. His position was due to the occupation of Kanauj the acquisition of Ajodhyā and Vārāṇasī and the reduction of the Tomaras of Delhi to vassalage.[51] The greatest king of the line was Govindacandra (c. 1114-1154 A.D.), who, as the grants of his

51 CHI, vol. III, pp. 509-10.

father Madanpāla and of his own show, fought many a battle to maintain his power. Not only did he extend his political influence up to Monghyr in south Bihar but also defend Bānāras and other sacred cities against the Turks during the life-time of his father.[52] Regarding the exploits of this ruler Dr. H. C. Ray[53] observes:

> "The Muslim king, who is reported to have laid aside his enmity seeing the display of the prince's matchless fighting, certainly belonged to the Yāminī dynasty of Ghaznī and Lahore. These rulers from time to time tried to emulate the victories of Maḥmūd by occasionally invading the Ganges-Yamunā valley... there seems little doubt that it was in these conflicts that prince Govindacandra distinguished himself."

It is interesting to note that in connection with the Muslim inroads a tax called "Turuṣka-daṇḍa" was levied on the subjects of the Gāhāḍvāla king.[54] This shows permanent arrangement and anxious care for military defence of the country of the early Gāhāḍvālas.

Though himself a capable ruler and a good warrior, Jayacandra (1170-1194) committed the fatal mistake of quarrelling with the Cauhāns of Ajmere and Delhi and of remaining a passive spectator when Delhi under Pṛthvīrāja was struggling against the irresistible might of Mahammad Ghūrī. The height of ill-feeling and feud between Jayacandra and Pṛthvīrāja concerning the latter's carrying off the daughter of the former has been described in the Hindi

52 Ep. Ind., IX, p. 324 & 327; Ep. Ind. VII, pp. 115-116; JASB V. 1922.

53 DHNI I, p. 514.

54 IHQ June, 1949; Smith EHI. p. 400 fn.

epic Çand Rāso by Cand Bardāi. The story given therein may not be true, but it reflects the temper and attitude of the Rajput princes in the crucial moment of their country's history. North Indian politics seemed to depend not upon the principles of nationalism and co-operation but on personal jealousies. The battle of Chandrawār (near Etawah, U.P.) was the last battle-in which the existence of Hindu independence was at stake. The fall of Jayacandra signalised the end of Hindu resistance in all sectors—western, eastern and central. The following account of the battle of Chandrāwar is gathered from the Tāj-ul-Ma'āsir-un-Nizāmī:[55]

> "When the army was mustered, it was found to amount to 50,000 mounted men clad in armour and coats of mail with which they advanced to fight the Rāi of Benares. The king ordered Kutubuddin to proceed with the vanguard, consisting of 1000 cavalry which fell upon the 'army of the enemies of religion' and completely defeated it. The Rāi of Banares, Jaichand, the chief of idolatry and perdition, advanced to oppose the royal troops with an army countless as the particles of sand. The Rāi of Banares who prided himself on the number of his forces and war elephants, seated on a lofty howdah, received a deadly wound from an arrow and 'fell from his exalted seat to the earth.' His head was carried on the point of a spear to the commander, and his body was thrown to the dust of contempt."

The battle, according to the Muslim historian, was decisive. It was not exactly the want of preparedness, or the numerical strength of the army or the palpable inferiority in military tactics that account for Jayacandra's defeat and death. With one-million troops (we do not know how

55 Elliot, Vol. II, p. 209.

many cavalrymen and how many foot soldiers there were) and 700 elephants he boldly faced the enemy and met his fate. To oppose successfully the overwhelming cavalry charges he did not see his way to organise a confederacy of other Rājput rulers and increase the number of cavalry. In his pride he forgot completely his own people and country. Though Col. Tod speaks of Jayacandra's jealousy towards Pṛthvīrāja, it is too much to think that there was a conspiracy on the part of the former to invite Muhammad Ghūrī and bring about the ruin of the latter who was his political rival.[56] Jayacandra was not at least a Pausanius or an Alcibiades. His attitude on the eve of the battle of Tarāin does not show that he ever realised the common danger, and as Dr. H. C. Ray[57] points cut, 'there is no evidence to show that Jayacandra, even from an intelligent perception of his own self-interest, co-operated in any way with the Cāhamānas'. So far as the battle of Chandrawār and the fall of Kanauj are concerned, it is the head of the military organisation rather than the system itself that was in part responsible for the catastrophe.

D. *The Cāhamānas of Śākambharī, Ajmere and Delhi*

The Cāhamānas or Cauhāns of Sākambharī, Ajmere and Rājputanā made themselves masters of Delhi by defeating the Tomaras in the 11th century. The name of Vigraharāja II is associated with that exploit. In the famous Sibalak pillar inscription at Delhi (Feroz Shāh ki-Lāt) Bisaldeva (Vigraharāja II according to some, grandfather of Pṛthvīrāja II) claims the credit of clearing the country of Musalmans and of making it Āryabhūmi again.[58] Pṛthvīrāja III,

56 AHI (Macmillan), p. 278.
57 DHNI Vol. I, p. 542.
58 I.A. Vol. XIX, p. 209.

(c. 1179-1192), nephew of Vigraharāja IV, was the most illustrious ruler of Delhi and Ajmere on the eve of the Muslim conquest of Hindusthān. His capital was a well-guarded city. The ruins of the fort of Rāi Pithorā can even now be traced.

"The fort of Rāi Pithorā, which surrounds the citadel of Lalkot on three sides, would appear to have been built to protect the Hindu city of Delhi from the attacks of Musalmans. The wall of the city is carried from the north bastion of Lalkot called Fateh Bhuj to the north-east for three quarters of a mile where it turns to the south west-east for 1½ miles to the Dumdama Burj. From this bastion the direction of the wall for about one mile is south west, and then north east for a short distance to the south and of the hill on which Azim Khan tomb is situated...the fort of Rāi Pithorā in Delhi proper is said to have nine gates besides the Ghazni-gate most of which can still be traced...the circuit of its wall was nearly 4½ miles...it possessed 27 Hindu temples of which several hundreds of richly carved pillars till remain to attest both to the taste and wealth of the last Hindu rulers of Delhi."[59]

Pṛthvīrāja's wars and conquests, his chivalrous deeds and love adventures have found expression in the writings of his court poet Cand Bardāi. Notwithstanding the high reputation and fame of the Chauhāna hero, the politics of Hindusthān was at this time rotten to the core. All the Rājput clans—the Gāhaḍvālas, the Chauhānas, the Cāndellas etc. had been engaged in interminable feuds to gain their selfish ends, forgetful of their heavy responsibility, i.e. India's national defence.[60] Their attitude and position have been fittingly portrayed by Dr. H. C. Ray thus,—'Lulled

59 Cunningham's Archaeological Report 1862-63, pp. 183-184.
60 Tod: Rajasthan Vol. I, p. 276.

into a false sense of security by the temporary cessation of vigorous attacks from the weak successors of Maḥmūd, they carried on petty feuds and failed to notice the formidable storm cloud that was slowly gathering strength in the hills of Ghūr.'[61]

The fall of the Ghaznivides and the rise of the principality of Ghūr in the hills of Afghanistan precipitated the evil hour of the Hindus in the plains. Muhammad Ghūrī's victorious march on India began in 1174 A. D. Having made himself master of Sind and the Punjab, Shābu-uddīn Muh. Ghūrī directed his attack on the Cāhamāna prince of whose heroism and military renown he was not aware. Pṛithvīrāja met the slowly moving armies of his opponent at Tarāin,[62] a village between Thānesvar and Karnāl. According to Firishta, Pṛthvīrāja's army consisted of 200,000 horse and 3,000 elephants. Unable to stand the cavalry charges made by the Rājputs, the Turkish army dispersed in all directions, and soon the Sulṭān, himself receiving a wound, was forced to leave the field.[63] It was a terrible battle and a spectacular victory, too. Never did the Muslim arms meet with such a crushing defeat. In a sense it was a single-handed victory—Jayacandra, the powerful ruler of Kanauj, who might have been of incalculable assistance, kept aloof,—hesistant and suspicious. But the revenge that was in store required better nerve, better resources and better understanding and co-operation to stave off the calamity.

61 DHNI. I, p. 542.

62 Tarain or Telwari, a village in the district and tashil Karnāl, Punjab...14 miles south of Thānesvar and 84 miles north of Delhi on the Delhi-Umbala-Kalka Railway. Imp. Gaz. Vol. XXIII, p. 390.

63 TN., p. 466.

The second clash with Pṛthvīrāja took place on the same ground a year after, i,e. in 1192 A.D. Muhammed Ghūrī made grand preparations to retaliate. At the head of a large and well-equipped army consisting of 120,000 men, Turks, Afghans and others, the Sultan marched towards Hindusthan in 1 92 A.D.

The apprehension of a bloody contest with the ruler of Ghūr did not leave Pṛthvīrāja idle. The safety of Hindu India was at stake, and he called upon his fellow Rājput princes to rally round his banner to oppose the advance of the Turks. The response from the Indian chiefs was dramatic, and in a short time he succeeded in collecting a huge army which, according to Firishta, consisted of 300,000 horse and nearly 3,000 elephants, and 150 Rajput princes are said to have assembled in the camp.[64] The army collected in the field was huge in number, and yet the Hindus failed to carry everything before them.[64a] A terrible battle ensued. It lasted from sunrise to sunset. The desperate charge made by the Sulṭān's 12,000 mounted horsemen was too strong for the Allied Hindu host. The battle was lost, "one hundred thousand grovelling Hindus swiftly departed to the fire of hell,"[65] and Pṛthvīrāja fled from the field according to Muslim chroniclers, but was captured and finally 'despatched to hell'. The Hindu defence collapsed in the second battle of Tarāin not because there was want of personal valour or of combination among princes, but

64 T.N. Vol. I, pp. 465-69. T.F. Vol. I, pp. 173-78.

64a Relying on almost a contemporary historian Hasan Nizāmī and also Firishta, Dr. H. C. Ray seems to suggest that the second battle of Tārain was not perhaps *a fair one* and that 'M.uh. Ghurī really attacked the Hindu camp during a truce which the Cāhamāṇa generals accepted as genuine'. DHNI Vol. II, p. 1091.

65 Elliot II. 216.

because the Indian leader Pṛthvīrāja made some serious strategical errors and tactical blunders. It is well said that 'Tarāin was essentially a general's battle,—the triumph of genius in command, not of mere valour.'[66] It is really strange that Ghūrī's progress from Ghūr to the Eastern Punjab by way of Peshwār was uninterrupted.[67] In the second time the two armies should have met at a considerable distance from the scene of the first encounter, and steps should have been taken to oppose the enemy's march at all costs. Commenting on the failure of Indian leadership on this occasion Dr. Chakravarty[68] observes:

'It is sad to reflect that after the first battle of Tarāin (1191 A.D.) in which he (Pṛthvīrāja) won a signal victory over his Muhamadan adversary, he (Pṛthvīrāja) did not press his advantage to the fullest limit. Instead, he halted his troops, leisurely beseiged Sirhind, and neglected to take adequate precautions against the return of the Ghorian chief. It is true when next year Muhammad came back with a larger force, Pṛthvīrāja fought out the issue with courage and determination, but no gallantry and no heroism can save a people from the results of neglecting war preparations.' No organised offensive seemed to have emanated from the Hindu chiefs. India was on the defensive on every occasion against the Turks. That is the general impression that one gathers from the course of events in the period of Turkish onslaughts.

Hindu Confederacies: Why did they fail?

From the time of Jayapāla of Udabhāṇḍapur to that of

66 AWAI, p. 196.
67 DHNI Vol. II, pp. 1088-89.
68 AWAL, p. 194.

Pṛthvīrāja III of Ajmer and Delhi not one, but as many as three or four confederacies were formed to resist the foreign foe. The grim menace of a Turkish invasion compelled some of the north Indian states to lay side for a while their mutual hatred and jealousy. Curiously enough, each one of these coalitions proved ineffective in the long run. The first battle of Tarāin recorded the solitary instance of Indian victory due possibly to the confederacy of princes under the direction of Pṛthvīrāja, although this, too, was shorn of its tower of strength,—Jayacandra of Kanauj having stood apart.[69] The second encounter, which should have by normal expectation put an end to all troubles, and the conquests that followed, were to demonstrate that the co-operation among the allied powers proved neither lasting nor warm and that the leadership of national defence was far from satisfactory. One must not, however, lose sight of *the gravity of danger and vastness of the area that had to be defended.* But it is true that it was no new or unexpected attack. On the otherhand, one may take it as a new unwillingness to summon up courage and shake off pettiness rather than a state of unpreparedness that destroyed every prospect of success and survival. This reminds us of what Napoleon Bonaparte once said, "Better to have a known enemy than a forced ally." The blunders

69 It is probably the family quarrel between the Cāhamānas and the Gāhaḍvālas and their mutual political rivalry that made Jayacandra withhold his co-operation in the first battle of Tarāin. This reminds us of the attitude of Hindu Zamindars and the Nawab's trusted officers that put Serajuddala to immense difficulties. Had the Hindu Zamindars and influential persons like Rāṇī Bhabānī, Rājballav, Kṛṣṇa Candra of Nadiā, Jagat Sett etc. helped the last independent Nawab in the hour of his peril, the history of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa would have been different. Serājuddoula by Akshoy Kumar Maitra, 6th. Ed, 1332 B.S. pp. 75-77.

committed between 1191 and 1192 by Pṛthvīrāja III in not acting according to the exigencies of the time and the failure of the joint endeavour would only show that division of India into small states, marked by the absence of a strong centre formulating a common policy and commanding a well disciplined army trained in offensive and siege operations, stood in the way of effective national defence.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE MILITARY POWER AND ORGANISATION. OF THE GURJARA-PRATĪHĀRA EMPIRE

(C. 775 1018 A.D.)

If the ninth and tenth centuries were evidently the age in which India enjoyed full immunity from foreign attacks, it was beyond doubt the epoch of military renown and heroic exploits within, marked by the titanic struggle for supremacy over the Ganges-Jamunā Doāb among three princely houses of Southern, Western and Northern India. Never were the clash of arms and greed for territories so great as in this period. The Rāṣṭrakūṭas of Mānkir, the Pālas of Bengal and Bihar and the Pratīhāras of Western India appeared on the stage of Indian history as potential rivals, and the temporary eclipse of the Pāla power at the hands of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas of the Deccan led to the emergence of the Gurjara-Pratīhāras as the foremost power in Northern India. The Rāṣṭrakūṭas inherited the military capacity and conquering zeal of the illustrious Pulakeśī II of the early Western Calukya dynasty and the Pālas under Dharmapāla had already proved their worth by establishing their authority in Eastern India and by interfering with success in the affairs of Upper India. In the traingular contest for sovereignty which began in the ninth century the Pratīhāras came off with flying colours.

The Gurjara-Pratīhāras were a new factor in North Indian politics. The Gurjaras are first mentioned in Indian literature and inscriptions in the sixth century. The father of 'Sakalauttarāpathapati' and his southern rival fought against the Gurjaras. They are mentioned in Bāṇa's Harṣa-

carita, in Hiuen Tsang's Travels and in the Aihole inscription[1] of Pulakeśī II. At first, they established a number of principalities in Rājputanā, Gujārat and in the Punjab. The Pratīhāras were an important branch of the Gurjaras and ruled in Malwā. They might have served as feudatories[2] (door-keepers) to the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, and then rose to eminence under Nāgabhaṭa I and attained imperial status under Vatsarāja in about 783 A.D. Nāgabhaṭa II captured Kanauj, defeated Dharmapāla and placed his own nominee Cakrāyudha on the throne. In the heyday of their political greatness, particularly under Mihir Bhoja and Mahendrapāla, their empire extended from 'Pehoa in the Punjab to Deogarh in Central India, from Una in Kāthiāwāra to Pāhārpur in North Bengal.[3]

The Gurjara-Paratīhāras have been given a place among the Rājput clans of early mediaeval India. The foreign origin theory of the Rājputs started first by Col. Tod still holds the field inspite of the fact that many Indian scholars believe in the "Agnikula" theory and describe them as full-fledged Kṣatriyas claiming descent from the solar and lunar dynasties of the Vedic and Epic times. If it is conceded that the Gurjara-Pratīhāras entered India along with the Hūṇas, it may well be presumed that their dash, daring and military ardour was foreign, and their great love for country and religion was Indian. These qualities probably enabled them to build up by force of arms an extensive empire, even bigger than that of Harṣa of Kanauj. To rule over such a vast dominion and to defend it successfully

1 Ep. Ind. Vol. pp. 1-12.

2 Sañjam Ins. EI. XVIII.: Dr. H. C. Ray Chaudhuri, Pol. Hist. of A.I., 5th Edn., p. 631 fn.

3 Inscriptions Nos. 542, 544 and 710 of Kielhorn's List (EI Appendix) and others.

required a powerful military organisation and this they possessed beyond any doubt. The poet Rājśekhara in the introduction of his Bālabhārata refers to the cross-country military exploits of Mahīpāladeva. Even making some allowance for courtly exaggeration and poetic exuberance, one is tempted to think that the military organisastion of the Pratīhāras was on a footing of efficiency in the time of Mahīpāla. Such wide-spread military triumphs were possible many times in ancient and early mediaeval periods, viz.; under Samudragupta of Magadha, Lalitāditya of Kāśmīra and Harasa Śilāditya of Kanauj.

The Hindu military system, as it developed in the Gupta period (c. 320-550) and under the first Kanauj Empire (c. 600-650), did not undergo material changes in details in the age of the Gurjara-Pratīhāras. We notice the same reliance on the Caturaṅgabala minus the Chariot which practically disappeared in the seventh century as one of the aṅgas of the traditional Hindu army.[4] In matters of marching, camping, garrisoning forts, military formations and siege operations, there was no positive improvement. There are grounds for believing that mounted archers[5] played a leading part in the Gupta period. After the fall of the Guptas, who introduced new methods of warfare, horse-archery, borrowed possibly from the Scythians[6] fell into disuse, and the use of heavy columns and mobile warfare[7] ceased to be the regular feature in Indian military history, and perhaps there was a return to static warfare as in the past.[8] But there is no denying the fact that the Pratīhāra kings main-

4 Bāṇa's Harṣacarita. tr pp. 224-25, Watters Y.C., p. 239: P. C. Chakravarti: The Art of War in A I, pp. 25-26.

5 Allan-Gupta Coins Pls. VIII, 11-19 & XXII.

6 The Art of War in A.I. by Dr. P. C. Chakravarti, p. 42.

7 Raghu Vaṁśa, Canto IV.

8 Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 1949, p. 33.

tained an efficient cavalry. Arab traveller Sulāimān speaks highly of this important division of the army thus :— 'the King of Jurz (pratīhāra) maintained numerous forces and no other Indian prince had so fine a cavalry.'[9] The possession of a fine cavalry on which depended victories in battles in all ages was indeed a great asset with the Pratīhāras and made their military organisation sufficiently strong and to some extent dependable. Another Arab traveller Al-Maśūdī (890-956 A.D.) observes that they had to keep in readiness 'four mighty armies to meet enemies in every direction... the army of the north wars against the prince of Multan and with the Musalmans; his (the King's[9a]) subjects on the frontier. The army of the South fights against Balhāra, King of Mānkir. The other two armies are in every direction,[10] and each of them numbers 700,000 or 900,000 men. This probably suggests that the organisation of the Pratīhāra army was made on a territorial basis, as was the case with the Indian army before the Sepoy Mutiny i.e. in the 19th century. We hear of the Bombay Army, the Madras Army, and the Northern Army.[11] Military officers, bearing the title of Mahādaṇḍa-nāyaka, Mahāsenāpati, Mahābalābikṛta, Mahā Pīlupati, etc., existed as in the Gupta and Pāla times. In all periods of India's ancient history forts were considered a useful item in the scheme of national defence. Each fort was in charge of an officer known as Durgādhakṣya or Koṭṭapāla.[11a] Prāntapālas and Dvārpālas

9 Elliot. Vol. I, p. 4. 10 *Op. cit*, p. 23.

9a 'One of the neighbouring kings of India who is *far from the sea* is the Baüüra, who is the lord of the city of Kanauj'.

11 State and Government in A.I., p. 146.

11a In the time of the great Marātha leader Śivāji 'every fort and thānah was placed under three officers of equal status, viz., the havtader, the Sabnis and the Sar-i-naubat, who were to act jointly'. Sarkar: Shivaji, 4th Ed., p. 346.

served as officers to control the frontiers as Wardens of Marches. According to Dr. A. S. Altekar, 'the same officer worked in both capacities as was the case under the Pratīhāra at the fort of Gwalior whose commandant was also Maryādādhurya, or 'the officer in charge of boundary'.[12]

While the forces of the Pratīhāras—infantry, cavalry and elephant corps, proved highly effective in all campaigns, their naval department, if it existed at all, occupied a minor position. The Pratīhāras were essentially a land power: the question of naval defence was not very pressing, nor did their empire reach the sea eastward or westward. Shut out from the coast regions by the Pālas in the east and the Arabs and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas in the west, they flourished most as an inland military power. But why did the Pratīhāras fail to retain their military prestige and political ascendancy for a longer period? Unfortunately no Kautilya has left for us a detailed account of their military organisation. The days of standing armies were no more. The superiority of India cavalry both in number and efficiency was possibly diminishing. Like their predecessors, they depended to a large extent upon the contingents supplied by their Sāmantas and subordinate allies. It is not difficult to imagine that in their constant warfare with Indian neighbours as also in relieving Arab pressure from the West, the Pratīhāras in the bright days of their prosperity and in the dark hours of misfortune were aided substantially by a number of feudatory princes. Epigraphic evidence[13] proves that Mahīpāla requisitioned the services of his feudal chiefs with a view to recover some portion of his empire.

12 *Ibid*, p. 146.

13 Ep. Ind. El. VII. 1216.

Reliance on feudal levies and subordinate allies proved harmful to the empire in the long run. As Dr. H. C. Ray observes,—'the incipient hostility of the Pālas in the east and the powerful combination of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and the Arabs were perennial sources of danger...the economic consequences of continuing such a struggle would have sapped the foundation of any empire.[14] Throughout the tenth century and the first quarter of the eleventh the defence of the North-Western India was ably conducted by the Hindu Śāhis of Afghanistan and the Punjab against the Ghaznivide rulers, and the home territories of the Pratīhāras enjoyed a brief period of relief till the hectic days of Sultān Maḥmūd's lightning raids. India stood in need of reconstruction of her military system to cope successfully with the dashing cavalry charges of the Ghorian chief in the 12th century.

The Cambay plates[15] of Govinda III prove the capture of Kanauj soon after 915 A. D. by Indra III. When Sulṭān Maḥmūd marched upon the city, the Pratīhāras had lost their military strength and energy. As Firishta[16] writes, 'Terrified by the force and formidable appearance of the invaders he (Koonwar Rai = Rājyapāla) resolved to sue for peace, and accordingly going out with his family submitted himself to Sooltan Maḥmood.'

In conclusion, it may be stated with fairness that though the elimination of the Pratīhāras as the formidable military power was unfortunate, they, nevertheless, rendered an excellent service to the country and to their religion Hinduism by keeping back the Arab thrust for nearly two centuries. A weaker power in Madhyadeśa would certainly have facilitated Arab penetration beyond Sind with a lot of changes in its wake.

14 Dr. Ray : Dynastic History of Northern India Vol I, p. 579.
15 Ep. Ind. VII. 38. 16 Brigg's tr. Vol. I, p. 57.

List of Offices, Military and Foreign, under the Pratīhāra Empire

I Military

(*a*) Senāpati—Commander-in-Chief.

(*b*) Mahā-sāmanta—Feudatory prince of a higher rank.

(*c*) Sāmanta—Feudatory prince of a lower rank.

(*d*) Koṭṭapāla or Durgādhakṣya—Officer in charge of Forts.

(*e*) Prāntapāla or Dvārapāla—Officer in charge of Frontier.

(*f*) Provincial governors all charged with responsible military duties.

(*g*) Maryādādhurja—Officer in charge of boundaries.

II Foreign

Dūta (Envoys) to maintain regular relations with foreign countries.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MILITARY ORGANISATION OF THE PĀLA EMPIRE

(C. 750-1150 A.D.)

The military tradition and warlike tendencies of the people of Bengal and their rulers go as far back as the Epic and Purāṇic times. The Great Epic preserves an account of the great struggle of the Vaṅgas, Puṇḍras and Suhmas against the eminent Epic heroes like Kṛṣṇa, Bhīmsena and Karṇa.[1] In the fourth or fifth century A.D. the people of Bengal had probably raised the standard of revolt against King Candra of the Meharauli. (Iron Pillar Inscription of Delhi). This king, whose identification is in dispute, destroyed the power of his enemies in the Vaṅga countries 'who offered him a united resistance'.[2] Proximity to the sea enabled the Gauḍa people to be a sea-faring nation. In the seventh century they appeared as a great military-power under Śaśāṅka,[2a] King of Karṇasuvarṇa or Western Bengal. In the 8th Century the Pāla Kings of Bengal carved out

1 Mabht. Sabhā Parva. Bhīsma Parva.

2 CII. III. 141. King Candra is sometimes identified with Candragupta II. For arguments vide Select Inscriptions by D. C. Sircar, p. 275 fn.

2a The state organisation in independent Bengal under Śaśāṅka was similar to that of the Imperial Guptas. The monarch was dependent on feudal aristocracy. The gradation of feudal chiefs seems to rest upon the extent of land under their control, the political status they enjoyed and personal influence they had at the court of the paramount power. (Dr. N. R. Ray's article in Caturaṅga, Pous B. S. 1352).

for themselves an extensive dominion in Eastern India and under Dharmapāla and Devapāla the country attained the status of a north Indian power by means of wars and conquests.[3] They ruled for over three centuries and raised Bengal to the position of eminence, politically and culturally. The military organisation and defensive arrangements of the Pālas who built up a strong and fairly big kingdom and held it for a pretty long time, is not a matter of minor importance. The land-grants of the Pāla Kings give us a long list of officials,[4] both civil and military, and although it is difficult to determine the functions of these officials in every case, the list serves our purpose, giving us a fair idea of the organisation of the Pāla State.

1. *Army*

As to the composition, the Pāla army must have been composed of foot soldiers, mounted soldiers, elephants, ships, herds of cows, buffaloes, goats and sheep.[5] The Nālandā Copper plate No. 3 of Dharmapāla refers to the traditional five-fold division of the army, viz. cavalry, infantry, chariot, elephants and navy.[6] During his campaign against the Kaivartas, Rāmapāla, as the Rāmacarita[7] informs us, made liberal distribution of wealth and land to his feudatories to raise a powerful army consisting of cavalry, elephants and infantry. The use of chariots on a large scale had fallen into the background since the time of Harṣa. But the

3 Khalimpur grant of Dharmapāla (Ep. Ind. IV. 213). Monghyr grant of Devapāla (Ep. Ind. XXIII. 293).

4 HB. Vol. I. Chapter X. Appx., pp. 284-89.

5 The expression 'naubala-hasty-aśva-go-mahish-ājavik-ādi-Vyāprtaka' occurs in the grants of the Candra, Varman and Sena Kings of Bengal. (The Ramganj CP of Īśvaraghoṣa of Dhakkari (IB 149).

6 HB. Vol. I, p. 279.

7 RCI. 43. 44-45.

reference to an official called 'Gaulmika' is an indication of chariots being one of the constituents of the army. 'Gaulmika' was probably an officer-in-charge of a military squardon called Gūlma, consisting of 9 elephants, 9 chariots, 27 horses and 45 foot soldiers.[8] There are illustrations of *chariots* and *armed warriors* in the Pāhārpur Plate No. LVII (History of Bengal Vol. I).

As regards the method of recruitment, the probability is that men from different provinces of India formed part of the army as was the practice prevalent in other parts of the country in previous ages. Inscriptions mention *Gauḍa forces*, besides men belonging to the tribes like Mālava-Kas-Karṇāṭa-Lāṭa-Choḍa etc. Dr. Majumdar[9] writes,—'The mention in the Pāla records of a number of tribal names along with the official may be taken as referring to the military units recruited from other tribes[9a]...the fact that there is no reference to these tribes in Khalimpur Copper plate of Dharmapāla, might lead one to presume that this military organisation was not fully developed till towards the close of his reign. The name 'Gauḍa' in the list is certainly very interesting and possibly refers to *soldiers recruited in the home territory of the Pālas*...it is obvious from this list that the Pāla Kings recruited mercenary soldiers from all parts of India.'

It may be mentioned here that as late as the time of the Vijaynagar Empire (1336-1600 A.D.) some parts of the army, viz, the infantry and the cavalry were recruited from all classes and creeds including Muslims. The use of

8 HB. Vol. I app. A, p. 285. Dr. Fleet transates it as 'Superintendent of wood and forest' (CII. III. 54. fn. 4).

9 HB. Vol. I, p. 279.

9a The words Chāta-bhāta which follow these tribal names mean regular and irregular troops (CII. III. 98).

elephants, camels and artillery has been proved from foreign accounts.[10]

Nothing definite is known regarding other important military matters such as plans of campaign and general methods of warfare. But the reference in the Pāla records to an officer called 'Mahāvyūhapati' certainly points to the formation and use of different kinds of battle-arrays already noticed in the time of Kauṭilya and the Mahābhārata as an essential part of military strategy, and the History of Bengal[11] would have us believe that "marches of each element in dense formations were the general rule in military movements". The appointment of officers like 'Koṭṭapāla' (in charge of *forts*) and 'Antapāla' (in charge of *frontiers*) and the employment of messenger spies show the efficiency of the Defence Department of the Pāla empire [11a]. The recruitment of mercenary soldiers and the long list of officers maintained by the state would clearly suggest that the entire army establishment received salaries in cash and the contingents supplied by Sāmantas fought on behalf of their overlord and acted possibly on the basis of feudal obligations.

10 AHI, pp. 382-83.
11 Vol. I, p. 280.
11a The mention in the Irda Copper plate of the Kamboja King Nayapāla of the Adhyakshavargga—the Senāpati, the Sainika-Saṁgha-mukhya, the Dūta, the Gūḍha-puruṣa, and the Mantrapāla (political advisers) has enabled Dr. R. C. Majumdar to opine that in the Military Department 'there were various organised units whose chiefs assisted the commander-in-chief. The Foreign Department seems to have two distinct branches, one dealing with general policy regarding external affairs, and the other corresponding to an Intelligence Department, whose fields of activities lay in foreign countries.' (H.B. Vol. I, p. 283).

2. *Navy*

Bengal built up early a naval tradition. The account of the conquest of Laṅkā (Ceylon) by Vijaysiṁha, son of Siṁhabāhu as preserved in the Pāli Chronicles of Ceylon is an echo of Bengal's naval activities and military exploits. Thrown into the arms of the sea and noted for nautical aptitude, the people of Bengal utilised their naval resources to the fullest extent. Kālidāsa[12] has mentioned the naval force of the country by referring to Raghu's conquest of the Vaṅga chiefs with their *fleets*. Epigraphic evidence proves the existence of *harbours* and *dockyards* in the sixth century A.D. A copperplate grant of Dharmāditya[13] dated 531 A.D. mentions 'Nāvāṭa-Kṣeṇī' or a ship-building harbour. 'The Arabian sea was used mainly for trade purposes, the Bay of Bengal was different. The supremacy in that sea was naval and political, based on an extensive colonisation of the islands and it ceased only with the breakdown of Cola power in the 13th century', so says Panikkar,[14] while describing the influence of sea power on Indian history. By the time the Pālas became the dominant power in Bengal, and Bihar, the importance of the navy was fully realised, and we shall not be far from the truth if we say that it formed a regular feature of their military operations.[14a] Three well-known epigraphic records may be quoted in this connection. The *Khalimpur copperplate*[15] of Dharmapāla runs thus :

12 Raghuvaṁśa IV. 36.

13 I.A. XIX, 1910, 195f.

14 India and the Indian Ocean: Chapter II, p. 28.

14a The Yuktikalpataru, a work written in the 11th century, mentions *three kinds of ships.* The author refers to 27 other types of vessels the largest of which being 276 ft. and 2,300 tons in weight. For details see R. K. Mookherjee—Indian Shipping, pp. 21-24.

15 Ep. Ind. IV. 299.

"Now—from his royal camp of victory at Pāṭaliputra, where the manifold fleets of boats proceeding on the path of Bhāgīrathī make it seem as if a series of mountain-tops had been sunk to build another causeway (for Rāma's passage)".

The *Kamauli grant*[16] of Vaidyadeva states that in the reign of Kumārapāla he (his favourite minister) obtained *a naval victory in South Bengal.* Moreover, the Sena king *Vijaysena* (c. 1095-1198) led a naval expedition to the West and *advanced along the course of the Ganges.*[17] "We may infer" writes the History of Bengal, "from the above passage that Vijaysena's victorious fleet sailed westward beyond Rājmahal".

The records referred to above are sufficient materials to warrant the conclusion that *the Pāla kings maintained a powerful navy and exercised some sort of control over the sea.* It is no exaggeration to say that the Gauḍa people, who had built up a naval power and who have been described as living on the sea-shore (Samudrāśraya) in the Harāhā Inscription[18] of 554 A.D., left their naval traditions as a legacy to their successors—the Pālas and the Senas of Bengal. It can, therefore, be affirmed that had any attack like that of the Arabs on Thānā in the early eighth century been launched by way of the eastern shore, the result might have been quite different. Like the people of Bengal in the Hindu period, did not the people of Mahārāṣṭra under Śivāji show that "the Hindu race can build *a nation,* found *a state,* defeat enemies and conduct *naval battles* on equal terms with foreigners"?[19] In proportion to their ambition,

16 *Ibid.*, II, 351.
17 I.B. III. 54.
18 Ep. Ind. XIV. p. 110 Et. Seq.
19 J. N. Sarkar—A Short History of Aurangzeb, p. 240.

resources, and military abilities, the Pālas did much fighting, adding and losing territories in their struggle with other Indian states and finally leaving a name behind in the dynastic chronicle of Northern India. Their long and successful rule over a wide area in the teeth of opposition from their acquisitive neighbours bears testimony to their stable governmental organisation. But one thing that strikes us is that their regimé synchronises with a period of Indian History in which Eastern region's placid calm was not disturbed nor its ability to defend itself tested by any terrible invasion from outside. Being far away from the storm-centre of North Indian politics, and freed from the restraining influence of a central authority, Bengal and Bihar did not feel the tremor of Sultān Maḥmūd's terrific thrust. When the Muslims fell upon them, the Pāla power was a mere shadow of its former-self territorially and *militarily*,[20] and, therefore, quite unable to defend itself. The loss of Bengal to the Senas and the subsequent conquest of Bihar and part of Western Bengal by Ikhtiyār-Ud-dīn Muḥammād, son of Bakhtiyār Khalji point to the same conclusion, although the extent and importance of such conquests might have been unduly exaggerated by Muslim historians.[21]

3. *Officials of Military Department*

From the Pāla, Varman, Candra and Sena imscriptions[22] the following list of officers for War and Peace may be drawn up:—

20 For weakness of the successors of Kumārapāla and their inability to defend themselves against attacks from outside and within, see H.B. Vol. I, p. 170.

21 H.B. I, p. 224.

22 *Ibid*, I. Appx., pp. 284-89.

I. Army

1. Mahāsenāpati or Commander-in-chief.
2. Senāpati or Commander of the Army.
3. Kottapāla or Officer in charge of Forts.
4. Gaulmika or Officer in charge of a Military Squadron.
5. Balādhyakṣa or Officer in charge of Infantry.
6. Mahāgaṇastha, probably a military officer.[23]
7. Mahābalādhikaranika or officer in charge of the Military Secretariat.
8. Prāntapāla or the Warden of Marches.

II. Navy

1. Nākādhyakṣa, probably a mistake for Nāvadhyakṣa or Naukādhyakṣa or Superintendent of Ship. In the Sena period this officer was renamed 'Nau-bala-Vyāpṛtaka'.[24]

III. Foreign Department

1. Mahā-Sāṁdhi-Vigrahika or Minister in charge of Peace and War.
2. Dūta or the Ambassador.

The military failure of a nation depends on many things. The defeat of the Bengalee people at the hands of the Turks

23 "Gaṇa denotes a body of troops consisting of 27 chariots, as many elephants, 81 horses and 135 foot" H.B. Vol. I, p. 288. The officer has been mentioned in the following epigraphs: —

(1) Khalimpur plate (Ep. Ind. IV. 233)
(2) Belava grant of Bhojavarman (Ep. Ind. VII. 40)
(3) Tarpaṇdighi grant of Lakṣmaṇasena (Ep. Ind. XII. 9)

24 "The use of the term "bala" after "nau" brings out the real character of fleet". A.W.A.I., p. 62.

at the time of Lakṣmaṇasena, in many respects an enlightened and capable ruler,[25] does not prove that they never learnt to fight and organise themselves for defence and that cowardice had been the badge of their life. The people of Bengal have been displaying military skill and organising capacity ever since the days of the Mahābhārata. The common notion given wide currency during British rule in India that the Bengalees are a non-martial race seems incredible when the glorious military records, both legendary and historical, of the country and its people are taken into critical consideration.[26] The reverses that the Bengalees suffered at the hands of the Turkish general in about 1199 A.D. do not tell of personal frailties or the frailty of a particular class, but of the system to which the nation and the country as a whole stuck.

25 Tabaqāṭi Nāṣiri Raverty's tr., pp. 555-56; H.B. Vol. I, p. 219.

26 Compare History of the Sepoy Mutiny: Kaye and Malleson. Vol. I, p. 149.

"A battalion of Bengali Sipahis fought at Plassey, side by side with their comrades from Madras...that the Bengali Sipahi was an excellent soldier, was freely declared by men who had seen the best troops of the European powers."

CHAPTER NINE

BREAKDOWN OF HINDU MILITARY SYSTEM·

It is a matter of common knowledge that ancient Indians were not concerned solely with art, literature, religion and philosophy. War and diplomacy, expansion and imperialism occupied much of their time and energy. They ruled empires, trained and fashioned soldiers, led armies in battles, created navies, erected fortifications, planted colonies and carried on diplomatic relations with neighbouring countries. But the underlying principle behind India's foreign poilcy in the past was peace and not aggression. Jingoism was not her message. She never sought dominion over others,—she lived in peace with her neighbours and the world outside. Indian statesmen have always been guided by diplomacy and not force.[1] The importace of the army in relation to the state did not diminish in the eyes of Indian political thinkers even in the time of Śukra, who observes, —'King is the root of the tree of state; the ministry is its trunk, the military chiefs are branches, the army are the leaves of the tree, and the subjects are its flowers, prosperity of the country its fruits and the whole country the final seed.'[2] The Doctrine of Maṇḍala[3] or the Statal circle,—the so-called twelve states, five in front of Vijigīṣu (Central state desiring conquest and expansion?) and four in the rear together with 'Madhyma' and 'Udāsīna' was considered by

1 Smith. Oxford History, p. 84.

2 Nitisāra (B. K. Sarkar's tr.), V. 12.

3 Kauṭilya—Arthaśāstra (Shyāma Śāstry's tr.), pp. 312-13, 317-20. Inter-state Relations in Ancient India by Dr. N. N. Law.

ancient writers to be the most convenient instrument for regulating interstate relations and diplomacy. The chief purpose of the Maṇḍala consisted in the determination of the courses of action (six in number, viz. Sandhi, Vigraha, Yāna, Āsana, Samāśraya and Duidhībhāva) to be adopted by the Central state in the interest of its own maintenance and extension. The traditional four-fold or five-fold army described in the Epic and Purāṇic literature with some addition and alteration remained the principal pillar of strength from the time of Alexander down to the end of the Early Medieval period. After the break-up of the mighty Maurya Empire (c. 185 B.C.) the defence of India's north-west frontier became a great problem. Repeated foreign inroads —the coming of the Greeks, Śakas, Parthians, Kuṣānas, Hūṇas and Gurjaras and their settlement in the country showed unmistakably the inferiority of the Indian cavalry when compared with the strength and mobility of mounted soldiers who came from outside. The rise of powerful dynasties and well-organised kingdoms and their strong determination to free India from foreigners resulted in the extermination and to some extent the absorption of the foreign races making India their temporary abode. But from those difficult days of insecurity and weakness to the stormy times of the Turkish raids and conquests, India had been suffering from that handicap. No attempt was made to remove this disability and consequently it remained a weak spot on India's national defence. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D. the Hindu military system which was at its best in the time of Candragupta Maurya, stood discredited. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that the gradual decay of powerful ruling dynasties in Northern India and steady deterioration of the art of warfare had much to do with the headlong fall of Hindu kingdoms and their loss of independence. The collapse of the Hindu

military system was primarily due to three causes, viz, (a) military, (b) political, and (c) social.

(a) The feeble resistance offered by the Hindu states sprang from a cause which was neither sudden nor unexpected.. The apparent weakness of Indian horsemen both in number and efficiency has been present ever since the raid of Subuktigīn on the dominions of Jayapāla of Bhātindā. India was never a good horse-breeding country and always suffered from the scanty supply of horses. Only Sindhu, Bālhika and Prāgjyotiṣapura and Kamboja were noted for horse and have received unstinted praise from the Mahābhārata, Kālidāsa and Kalhaṇa. So good horses were available only in the north and west, the east and south suffered greatly in this respect. The Venetian traveller Marco Polo[4] who visited India in the 13th century stated that a large number of horses were imported into southern India from Arabia and Persia. Malabar was particularly unsuited for breeding of horses. The climate of South and East India was not suitable for horse-breeding. Moreover, the position of the Indian cavalry as it stood at all times warrants the conclusion that 'the cavalry never came to occupy the front rank in the army organisation of ancient India; it never in fact came to form the core of a Hindu army.'[5]

Muslim historian have attributed the astounding successes of Maḥmūd of Ghaznī and Muhammad Ghūrī in their Indian campaigns to the skilful use of a well-trained and well-disciplined cavalry.[6] When judged in this light,

4 Yule. Marco Polo II. 342.
Also C/o Kauṭilya—'The breed of Kāmbhoja, Sindhu, Aratta and Vānāyu countries are the best'. (Bk. II. Chap XXX).

5 Dr. P. C. Chakravarty—The Art of War in Ancient India, p. 36.

6 Elliot, vol. II, 38, 51, 131, 248, 295-6.

the paucity and incompetence of ancient India's cavalry may be put down as one of the reasons why Muslim invaders proved better fighters and won easier victories. The best horse-breeding grounds in Asia were under Muslim control. Thus, while for the above reason Indians failed to bring into the field numerous horses, Muslim invaders had their unfailing recruiting grounds in Asia. Sulṭān Maḥmūd and Muh. Ghūrī were generals of exceptional ability and took advantage of the tactical blunders committed by the defenders of Indian freedom. It may be incidentally mentioned here that the weakness in respect of cavalry, artillery, martial technique, manufacture of firearms, education and development of character, was noticeable even in the 18th and 19th centuries when the Marāṭhas, a great military race, gave way to the English. Dr. S.N. Sen[7] observes,—'The Marāthas had long been familiar with artillery and firearms, but they neglected to learn the science and technique of these valuble weapons and continued, till their final overthrow, to rely for their supplies on the European settlements at Bombay and Goa.'

Then again, another weak spot in Indian military system has been searched out by Sir. J. N. Sarkar[8] who ascribes the failure of Indian armies against Europeans in the 18th century to their want of education and development of character. It is said that greatness in a general consists in his making as few mistakes as possible and in profiting by those of his enemies. One of the main causes of Hannibal's early success against Romans in the Second Punic War (218-216 B.C.) was the personal element of his own genius and strategical blunders committed by the Roman general

7 Military System of the Marāthas, pp. 258-59.
8 Fall of the Moghul Empire, Vol. IV, p. 110.

because of the divided command.[9] In this connection one is reminded of the famous maxims of Napoleon—"Unity of command is the first necessity of war." If divided command was one aspect of Indian failure, the ignorance of what is called "shock tactics", i.e. surprise attack simultaneously and from different directions etc. was another. Nor is there any instance on record of guerilla warfare or employment of Periclean or Fabian strategy. The Indian rulers opposing the Muslim invaders made use of one tactics,—viz. the defensive, whereas the latter were seen to regard the offensive 'as a fundamental proposition of warfare'. The Muslim tactics and resources were suited to the requirements of the time. Then again, the elephant corps, employed in almost all the theatres from the battle of the Hydaspes to that of Tarāin became, in the ultimate analysis, a strength of doubtful value. The elephants running amock and doing havoc on the battlefield were responsible for the defeat of such stout heroes as Puru and Ānandapāla of the Punjab. Although profuse praise has been bestowed upon war elephants' usefulness and serviceability in big campaigns, they often proved a dangerous element, falsifying the anticipations of ancient writers like Kauṭilya[10] and comparatively recent writer like Kāmandaka.[11] These considerations bring us to the point of thinking that '*the Hindu military organisation was obsolete presenting a sad contrast to the organisation discipline and leadership among the Muslims.*' Dr. D. C. Ganguly (Proceedings of the Indian History Congress 1949, p.123) opines that 'the rules of warfare and the code of morals which guided the combatants of the Mahābhārata war, guided also the Kings and Generals in the battlefields

9 J. Wells: A short History of Rome, p. 117.
10 Arthaśāstra Bk. II. Chapter II.
11 Nitisāra XVI. 10-12.

throughout the ages before the advent of the Moslems. *Onslaught on the rear or on the flanks of the enemy was regarded as a sinful act.* To advance in pursuit of a retreating army was considered unchivalrous.' Another recent writer says,—'The armies of the invaders (Arab, Turkish and Afghan) were never very large[12] and their success was partly due to their superiority in equipment and the art of war.'[13] Every Muslim was a fighter and Islam served as a great unifying force.

(b) Of the political causes of the military debâcle of the 12th century in N. India, the first importance must be given, as most writers have done, to the division of India into innumerable small principalities without cohesion, without a sense of unity for the common purpose. The aims and ideals of the ruling houses working at cross-purposes rendered a united stand fruitless, and their sudden fall might properly be assigned to the fact that they, unlike the Muslim invaders, were not perhaps prone to fight for a cause,— religious or political. Secondly, the state and army organisation of the Rājput princes, who were left to defend the vast country from the successive blows of the Turks and Afghans, was feudal in character. The army consisted chiefly of contingents supplied by Sāmanta chiefs. Such a feudal army was hardly dependable or efficient. The princes themselves were no doubt patterns of heroism and courage, but the army on which they relied, being mostly Sāmanta forces, obeyed their overlord, and not unoften seized the opportunity of combining against him when, for one reason or the other

12 The second part of the statement does not appear to be true. C/o the number of the Arab expeditionary forces under Muh. Bin Kāsim as stated by Elliot (Vol. I Appendix, pp. 434-35) on the authority of Arab writers.

13 Coupland—India (A re-statement), p. 6.

he happened to be weak. The king was the pivot of the state the security of which hinged upon the loyalty of his fief-holders. When there was peace in the country the vassals became restless and when external dangers threatened them, their services were not always as valuable as they should have been.[14] A new phase in ancient Indian polity may be discovered from the Gupta period onwards. There were clear signs of feudal tendencies which resulted in the speedy growth of a number of feudal chiefs bearing the titles of Sāmanta, Mahāsāmanta, Senāpati, Mahāsenāpati, Mahārāja, etc. These chiefs enjoyed local autonomy while paying allegiance to the Gupta sovereign as their suzerain. Even the country-wide military exploits and conquests of Samudragupta failed to bring the whole of India under his direct administration. A uniform administrative control over areas lying outside the Gupta dominion being impossible owing to the separatist trend in Indian politics, a compromise was worked out between strict imperial control and full local autonomy. The Gupta emperor had to fall back upon the Kauṭilyan ideal of "Dharmavijaya." It is permissible to point out that all empires or consolidated kingdoms were, for all practical purposes, no better than confederation of vassal states from the fourth century A. D. The feudal character which the Indian army and government assumed in the Gupta age continued right upto the end of the Pāla period. Rājputanā was the home of Feudalism and the Rājput states retained this character all through, a government that fostered isolationism and stood in the way of coalition of political forces to combat a common danger. "The main reason why the Muslims so easily obtained their hold in India" says Mr. Coupland, "was the failure of the Hindu Kingdoms to combine against them. In the Middle

14 Ishwari P.—History of Muslim rule, pp. 21-22.

ages, at any rate, Christian Europe did better in this respect. French troops crossed the Pyrenees to help the Spaniards. The Crusades, despite their undercurrents of intrigue and greed, were a genuine manifestation of the unity of Western Christendom."[15] It seems quite true that the imperial sway or political supremacy either in Northern India or Southern India was not accompanied by a stable equilibrium due to internal disruption and discord. The question of national defence and territorial security was thrown into the cold shade of neglect. The lesson of history has taught Modern India to think of that eternal problem of the country's defence against foreign attack. Before India attained freedom in 1947, Indian leaders of thought raised the cry of "Undivided India"—"Union with a strong centre" solely in the interest of unity, uniformity and military defence.

Turning now to India south of the Vindhyas, we notice the utter incompetence of the South Indian states like Devagiri, Dorasumudra, Telingana, Tanjore and Madurā to cope successfully with the new Muslim master of the North. This fact perhaps supplies an illustration of the general belief that imperial sway in India was, due to the operation of many causes, out of gear, and even superiority in number and organisation of unions failed against foreign onslaught. If coalitions succeeded, they succeeded only against neighbouring kingdoms—the North against the South, the East against the West, but never effectively against a formidable foreign foe. Patriotism ceased to be the effective instrument of national defence. Self-interest and mutual jealousies were of greater concern than the interest of the country as a whole. Political revolutions taking place in distant or near

15 India, p. 6.

regions scarcely raised an echo in the minds of the masses. The people did not feel that they were a nation. Speaking of the causes of ancient India's political decline Sisirkumar Mitra writes :—"The cultural and spiritual unity remained almost in tact, no doubt, but the country had little political integrity worth the name, mainly because the society,—always in ancient India the basis of her political structure—had ceased to be a cohesive force in the communal consciousness of the people."[16]

(c) The subjugation of such a vast country with age-long civilisation could not be effected and the stately fabric should not have crumbled unless some forces other than political and military had been at work slowly but surely shaking the entire foundation. This would lead us to the consideration of the social causes of the fall of the Hindu kingdoms in the 12th and 13th centuries. Instances were not rare in the period under review when Indian fatalism served to a large extent to enfeeble the will to resist in the face of a danger of the gravest magnitude. We meet with cases where consultations were held with astrologers to ascertain the inevitable. Two such instances are on record. At the time of the Arab invasion of Sind, Dāhir, King of Alor, said to an astrologer, "I must fight to-day; tell me in what part of the heavens the planet Venus is, and calculate which of the two armies shall be successful and what will be the result." The astrologer replied, "According to the calculation the victory shall be to the Arab army, because Venus is behind him and in front of you." Rāi was angry on hearing this. The astrologer said, "Be not angered, but order an image of Venus to be prepared in gold." It was made and fastened to his saddle traps in order that Venus might be behind him and he might be victorious."[17] Lakṣ-

16 The Vision of India, p. 133.
17 Elliot Vol. I. (Chachnāma), p. 169.

maṇasen, the last independent ruler of Bengal convened a meeting of astrologers, wisemen and counsellors after the fall of Behar and sought their advice. Relying on the Śāstras they predicted that Bengal would fall into the hands of the Turks the following year, and requested him to move from the country so that they all might be safe from the molestation of the Turks. According to Minhāj-u-dīn,[18] a large number of Brahmins and others fled, although the Rāi himself did not take the fatal step. Making allowance for some measure of exaggeration by historians, we must not ignore the fact that *superstition, fatalism and panic* played their part in bringing about the collapse of the Sena resistance in connection with the Nadīyā raid of c.1197-98 A.D.[19]

Some writers, e.g. C.V. Vaidya[20] are disposed to regard the caste system as one of the contributory causes of the down-fall of Hindu independence. Nobody can deny that the caste system, the bedrock of the Brahamanical social organisation, divided the community into separate compartments, made unity difficult and exercised an unwholesome influence on the life of the people. But the system which took root in the third century B.C. and stood the test of time (some three thousand years) did not prevent India from creating big empires and defending them against foreign

18 DHNI I., pp. 372-73. According to the chronicler of the Nadīyā raid, Lakṣmaṇasena was himself a man of courage and military abilities. This is corroborated by the epigraphic records of his reign. A great responsibility rested no doubt with Lakṣmaṇasena's military officers and advisers. (History of Bengal Vol. I, pp. 244 & 246). The fall of the last stronghold of Hindu power in Eastern India proves, above all things, that the country's military system had already broken down for want of improvement it needed.

19 For difference of opinion on the date see AHI, pp. 279-80 fn.

20 Medieval India Vol. III. Chap, XXII, p. 355.

attacks. The Marātha leader Śivāji's empire was based on Hindu principles of caste and dharma as laid down in the Arthaśāstra and the Śukranīti, yet Shāhji's illustrious son held his own and could not be checked by the Moghuls of Delhi, the Portuguese of Goa and the Abyssinians of Jānjīra. It did not take away the power of Hindu resistance in an appreciable manner, either in ancient, mediaeval or modern times. Concerning the question whether the endless ramification of caste which was at its height in the Hindu period seriously affected recruitment to the army, Dr. Chakravarty[21] has conclusively proved by reference to ancient texts that the military profession was no monopoly of any particular caste. As in Mediaeval Europe, so in Mediaeval India fighting was the sole occupation of feudal knights. So, the enrolment of all the classes or the masses was possible neither in India nor in Europe till the dawn of the modern age.

One writer[22] has gone to the length of suggesting that in early mediaeval period Hindu intelligence found expression more in poetics and dramaturgy than in the careful cultivation of the art of war and that the army consisting chiefly of contingents supplied by Sāmantas was not reliable either in respect of number or efficiency. In the circumstances, neither caste nor the doctrine of Ahiṁsā which is said to have affected the food of the people and made them physically weak, was the real explanation of the catastrophe overtaking India in the 12th century. The loss of political freedom was not an isolated phenomenon. It must have been preceded *by social stagnation and moral decay.*

Prof. Mohammad Habib in his introduction to Elliot

21 The Art of War in Ancient India, pp. 78-82.

22 S. K. Das—The Educational system of the ancient Hindus, p. 194.

and Dowson's History of India as told by its own historians, (vol. II, p.37) has started a new theory to explain the cause of the collapse of Hindu rule and the advent of Turkish suzerainty in Mediaeval India. His thesis is that social rather than military reasons lay at the root of the Ghorian conquest of Northern India. He observes,—"What is called the Muslim, but is really the Ghorian conquest of India, meant two things,—(1) the substitution of the Ghorian Turks for the 'Thakurs' as the governing class, and (2) the enfranchisement of the Indian city-workers, accompanied by a considerable land-slide among them to-wards the new faith."

The tendency to luxurious living and moral dissipation of the Hindus as portrayed in the 'Gīta-Govinda' and the 'Pavanadūta' composed by the court-poets of Lakṣmaṇasena, in the "Naiṣadcarita" written in the court of Jayacandra of Kanauj, in the "Śiśupālabadha" composed in the 'court' of the Valabhī King, appears in all its nakedness. The Śiśupālabadha[23] contains descriptions of prostitutes accompanying as camp-followers in the army of Śrīkṛṣṇa and of the resort to hard drinking by Jādavas, male and female.[24] As the people had no share in the government and as there was a frequent change of dynasties of autocratic rulers, it was but natural that they (the people) would grow indifferent to political revolutions in the country. In the days of Hindu decadence the system of giving extensive training to the soldiers as enjoined by the Rāmāyaṇa, the Arthaśāstra and the Śukranīti was not strictly adhered to. The feudal character of the Rājput government and army from which the masses were completely divorced was an additional reason

23 Māgha's Śiśupālabadha XII. V. 27.

24 It will be of interest to say that Shivāji's 'strict enforcement of morality in his camp was a wonder in that age and has extorted the admiration of hostile critics like Khāfi Khan.' (Sarkar —Aurangzeb, p. 239).

why the people refused to be interested in such matters as the names and antecedents of persons occupying the thrones of Delhi, Kanauj, Vārāṇasī or Gauḍa after the destruction of some of the Rājput ruling houses. The apathy of the common man to the political fortunes of his country was much in evidence.

Conclusion

The probable explanation of the fall of the Hindu states is not one, but many. Mass indifference, internal decay, deterioration in the method of warfare and superior military abilities of the Turks coming from cooler regions with a fund of redoubtable energy and flashing promptitude were the four important factors which contributed to the collapse of the Hindus. Dr. P. C. Chakravarty[25] seems to think that the invaders, e.g. the Turks possessed moral virtues (by which he means courage, energy and determination) in a larger measure, and he goes on to say that "a civilised and prosperous community...is not a congenial soil for the natural development of these virtues, and the Hindus were infinitely more civilised and prosperous than the Turks." There is much force in Dr. Chakravarty's argument that the Hindus, when they reached the highest point of civilisation failed to retain moral virtues in an equal degree with the invading Turks despite their age-old military tradition with its emphasis on endless wars and ceaseless extension of territories etc. It is true, as Lord Bryce points out rightly, that 'there is no necessary connection between a fighting quality and an intellectual quality'.[26] This suggests a parallelism between Hindu downfall and the fall of the Roman Empire in the

25 AWAI, p. 192.

26 War and Human Progress—Lecture delivered in 1916 at the Birmingham University by Lord Bryce.

West at the stress of Germanic tribes. The cause of the fall of the latter with a boundary in no way less extensive than that of Hindu India, was both military and political. In the words of Davis[27] the real cause was a moral evil, the decay of *civic virtue*. By moral evil he does not mean deterioration in private life. "It is a mere superstition", he says, "that every victorious race is chaste and frugal, just and law-abiding or that ill-success in the struggle for existence is a symptom of the contrary vices. In many respects the Greeks who submitted to Philip and Alexander were morally superior to the victors of Salamis and Plataea. Private and political morality may spring from the same root, but the one has often flourished where the other has been stunted."

But at the same time History, ancient and modern, does not furnish us with a single example of a country going down before an invading horde and losing political freedom without some serious internal disruption and decay. Thus the main reasons why a vast and highly civilised country like India succumbed to external attack appear to be her incipient internal weakness and possession of a higher technique of warfare by her enemies. The absence of a higher technique of warfare in the early Mediaeval period together with the country-wide internal disorder, a legacy of centuries of inaptitude and inertia, was bound to create an alarming situation. Such was the real picture when the curtain dropped down upon the Hindu political drama. The errors, imperfections and slacknesses of the past, let us hope, will not repeat themselves. The national defence of the present must be relevant to the present and not to the past.

27 Medieval Europe, p. 18.

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